

JAPANESE ALL

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TO
MY MOTHER

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JAPANESE ALL

THE CANAL

A CANAL does not suggest anything romantic to the average Occidental, but that is because he does not know the canals of the Far East. Of all canals none offer more possibilities of romance than those of the Japanese capital. There one may gain some inkling into the peculiar romance of the Orient, a romance many-sided and queer, and, in the respect herein set forth, somewhat weird. Between the romance of the East and what is romantic to the East, there is doubtless a decided difference, as will presently appear. It is this latter aspect of the Oriental mind, however, that more often engages and impresses the unromantic foreigner.

The million-peopled streets of Japan's overgrown capital, especially in the lower sections of the city, are frequently threaded, though irregularly, by shallow, murky, artificial streams, that, for want of a more appropriate designation, may be dignified under the appellation of canals; and these winding waterways, wherever they dissect a street, are crossed by numberless nimble bridges over which pass even more numberless

multitudes from hour to hour, day in and day out ; while along their sinuous courses curious boats and barges, propelled by yet stranger human beings, men, women and children, ply from early dawn till night blots out the scene and brings welcome rest. This canal population is a motley breed, living from hand to mouth, paying no taxes and never long in the same place. The domestic life thereof is severely primitive, for the most part ignoring alike nuptial knots and marital obligations; and if progeny is unwanted, it is dropped overboard and disappears out to sea in the silence of the night tide.

This Venice-like region is older than the city—the remains, in fact, of the wide malarial marshes drained to afford space for a fishing village before the great Ota Dokwan set up his castle on the higher ground behind, reclaiming the foreshore from the tides, which showed that the warrior had an eye for strategic sites, as the Tokugawa shoguns believed when they selected old Yedo as the foundation of their capital, since become the metropolis of the nation, and of the Far East. With the rapid development of the capital under its new name, Tokyo, romance and mystery became more and more associated with canal life. What tragedies lie beneath these turbid waters not even the wildest flights of imagination or fancy can conceive. Some of these tragedies have slumbered there in the grimy and slimy

shallows for many a century, and some are but the sad episodes of modern Japan. All these lay, as untold secrets, until the dredge appeared.

The dredge is a new thing in Tokyo, and a terrible revealer of terrible secrets. When it first began to mope its slow way along these Tokyo canals, people crossing the bridges, or floating up and down the canals, just glanced at it as an Occidental curiosity, imported to deepen the waterways for the improvement of navigation. But soon the bridges came to be coigns of vantage, where hundreds of idlers gathered to witness the operations of the strange foreign device for biting at the dirty canal bottom; and, when it was discovered that the monster was an awful revealer of awful secrets, space could not be found to accommodate all that attempted to push their way into view of the dredge; so that the police were hard put to it to prevent some from being hurled into the water by the pressure; and often, too, there was grave danger of a flimsy bridge giving way, and precipitating the crowd into the filthy depths. Interest in the weird operations of the machine continued to increase, for no one at first could have supposed it was to become so attractive a source of romance, if not of romantic tragedy. But day by day, faithful to rumour, the dredge continued to throw light on many dark things, opening up long hidden wonders, until finally the city's multitudes were aroused

to aggressive curiosity. For long hours the same people were content to stand on the bridges, even under a torrid sun, gazing intently at the rise and fall of the great steel scoop, especially at its slow steady rise, for no one could guess what it might bring up next, seeing it had already brought to the surface such amazing revelations of human terror, crime and sorrow, as well as hidden treasures of gold and the remains of unfortunate pessimists of recent demise.

Beside the uncouth dredge were lined up broad, grimy barges to carry away what was scooped from the canal bottom ; and as each scoopful paused over a barge, shuddered and then suddenly relaxed its metal jaws to disgorge itself, it was expected to disclose something still more disconcerting than its last mouthful. And this, one must admit, it often did. However innocent it looked as it appeared mildly above the seething waters, the bargemen probed it with their long poles, feeling that peradventure something uncanny would emerge from the stubborn mass ; and thus they forced it at each rise to deliver whatever tale it could tell, whether gruesome or merely comic. This wondrous scoop, of horrid foreign invention, held the key to the situation ; and as it loomed above the troubled waters every eye was riveted on it as on an apparition.

Among the more numerous objects brought to light by the Tokyo dredgers were purses ; and as

they represented all types and times, and were, alas ! empty, the absorbing query went its round : Why so many empty purses ? No one appeared to know, till a policeman, to whom the question obviously seemed trivial, remarked that thieves and pickpockets usually threw purses into the canal after emptying them, so as to prevent detection. With this explanation the crowd assumed a knowing look and tried to recover its complacency ; those who had lost purses grew meditative, while some who had personally added to the quota thrown into the canal glanced about them apprehensively, none daring to slip slyly away for fear of creating suspicion.

One day the dredge brought up in one scoop a number of human skulls, and in a few succeeding scoops more skulls ; and then an odd skull, now and then, until the spot seemed as thick with them as shells in an oysterbed. A bed of skulls ! All drew a quick breath. The gaping throng on the bridge shivered in awe and horror. Who could unravel so fearful a mystery ? A find of purses was simply noting in comparison, though both were equally empty. Evidently many a year had passed since these victims had met their fate, for the skulls were gone further beyond recognition than poor Yorick's. Was it that they all decided to unite in finding an end to hopelessness and misery at the bottom of this slimy flood ? Perhaps. But here also the police proved the most

reasonable interpreters of the grim romance of the shovel. 'The skulls,' suggested the little officer of the law, uniformed in white duck, 'are those of criminals executed hereabouts many years ago, for there used to be a prison on the banks of the canal in the old days, and probably the heads of decapitated criminals were conveniently disposed of, by being thrown into it, with the connivance of the prison officials.' Yes, the poor immolated body, unable longer to take care of its own head, was forced to leave it behind, not lost but merely left. Ah me! If nations could collect all the skulls of those they have killed, no water on earth would be deep enough to hide the cruel and gruesome monument. But they are all hidden away in the old brown earth, or scattered under its water in mud, beyond the scoop of time, but determined some day to rise in judgement. And the world is satisfied to let it go at that. The skulls pile up; the crowd is thrilled by the new and sudden light on the old tragedy.

The dredge moves on to fresh hunting grounds; people rush headlong to gain a favourable position on the next nearest bridge. The bed of skulls, dumped out by law and now recovered by chance, is forgotten in the breathless anticipation of what the scoop will produce next. There is no telling what this fiendish foreign device will reveal. These Occidental monsters are merciless investi-

gators. The scoop drops with a great splash and appears once more above the black, glassy surface. What is that roundish-looking object? Why, there is a human face on one side of it! The bargeman pokes it out from the suspended scoop as it pauses and loudly drips mud and water; the thing descends with a ghastly thud into the bottom of the barge. It is no other than a modern head, freshly severed too, a mere man's head, the hair cropped short and the style intact. Obviously, it is not long since the poor fellow lost his head, but the reason therefor remains a mystery. If any one had an opinion he dared not ventilate it, not even the policeman. The bargeman picks up the grim object and lays it to one side; a faint groan is audible among the spectators; the foreman gives the order for the scoop to relax; there are no more heads. The scoop swings out again over the water and descends; brrrr—splash! And the merciless probe goes down again to stir up the infernal regions.

Well, what next? Nothing doing? A wave of disappointment sweeps over the massed faces; several scoops come up, and still nothing out of the common. Is the mine of wonder at last worked out? That is the question in all minds. The multitude sighs with *ennui*; the black, glistening scoop emerges again. 'Nothing?' did some one say? What is that rotund protusion on the far side of that heaped-up mass of mud! The

bargeman has seen it from the first, and has kept his eye steadily fixed on it. Nothing escapes his practised eye. He gives it a poke. It seems as hard and as heavy as a stone. Whatever can it be? The foreman orders the scoop to remain suspended and to retain its grip. The man with the stick prises out the object of interest. It proves to be a piece of crockery, fortunately unbroken; he seizes the earthenware pot before it falls, and lo! it seems to have a cover fitted into it and sealed. It is handed over to the captain. All eyes are strained to see what he will do with it. With a jemmy he forces the cover out of place; the crock is full of slime. He dips in his hand, and takes out from the wet sleep of centuries, golden coins of the realm, current before modern civilization was born. Whether this lucky find was appraised as of more interest than the skulls and the lonely head of recent date, it would be hard to say, but it certainly had a more practical value. The crock of coin is duly noted, the number of the coins too; and then it is set aside to be handed over to the State, with the heads of men already found.

At a snail's pace the clumsy and lumbering dredge moves a bit further up the canal. The new hunting ground excites more rabid interest than ever. And so it goes on through the humid heat of each livelong day. Some sections of the course so slowly covered prove much more rich in

deposits than others. Always some of the crowd are departing and being replaced by others less pressed for time; errand-boys and shop boys delivering goods, nurses with infants on their backs, old men, too, whose daily task is simply to wait. The postman and the telegraph-boy are late with deliveries because of the dredging operations. Even the policeman fails to move on, or to move others on, until the traffic is completely blocked and there is an uproar on the the verge of the crowd. Down goes the scoop once again with a whirr and a splash. The strong chain grinds on its rusty pulley, slackens, and the cruel scoop opens its wide steel jaws and takes hold with ravenous teeth like some monstrous tiger. The chain tightens, the engine strains, the great jaws slowly come together on some delicious secret of the underworld. Anything this time? Yes, the most remarkable find yet! Up come a man and a woman, lashed together with a silken girdle, both now alas! in the awful embrace of the unfeeling scoop. There is a faint burst of astonishment from the gaping spectators. The monotony of the last few minutes is broken, and that at least is some satisfaction. The bargeman orders the scoop to be lowered slowly to the deck—*sorasora*—(gently, gently), till it rests on the deck; then it slowly opens, and the man rolls the bodies of the unfortunate lovers out of the slimy mass onto a remnant of clean deck

near the bow of the barge. *Shinju!* (Love-death) passes in whispers from the centre to the circumference of the semicircle. The dead lovers lie beside the door where the bargeman and his family live. His children and their mothers gaze at the sight with unmoved faces. Love-suicide is common. Ah, what tale this find tells, let the unhappy and disappointed lovers of all lands relate. Even along the banks of a Tokyo canal the clash between love and duty forms the most poignant of all tragedies. Not so long ago, perhaps only the day before, this man and maid, were young and fair, revelling in the first ecstasy of love's young dream, but the stern interference of some cruel parent, guardian or slave-master, broke the spell, and shut out hope; thus deprived of union in this life, they decide to unite in death, and the black, unsavoury shallows of a canal became to them the only way to love's realization, perhaps consummation.

In a further section of the old canal many of the objects brought to light were old saddles, rusty swords, sabres of a bygone age, even military boots and other martial accoutrements. That a military barracks had once occupied the vicinity did something to explain whence these objects originated, but not why they should have been dumped into the canal. Soldiers, being mortal, may have been forced to the conclusion that new equipment was never forthcoming so long as the

old remained visible. These relics of battles long ago the crowd did not consider so interesting; the appetite for more gruesome finds was whetted and must be satiated. Romantic tragedy was the preference. Not to shock the reader too greatly with cruel detail, let it be simply stated that one day when the crowd was no less, and no less avid for excitement, than usual, all eyes fixed on the omnivorous scoop, what should it bring up but the body of a young girl, the fair victim demurely seated with her hands folded over her knees. All faces assumed a look of horror-stricken amazement. Yet it was just what they desired most to behold. Why should they thus pretend astonishment? Hardly a day passes without the body of a young woman being found, with life snuffed out, in the nation's waters, and no one makes any remark. What tales of sorrow the rivers, lakes, seas and canals of Japan could tell? Such incidents have long ceased to be sufficiently tragic to arouse public attention.

'Aha! What is this?' shouted one bargeman to another, as the huge scoop once more ascended flush with the gunwale of the mudscow. 'Oh, only another baby,' remarked his colleague, with little sign of either feeling or amazement. 'Oho! They've got another baby!' said one to another among the crowd, as though a child had been born to them, and they expected congratulations. Probably not so long ago that baby had been

born to some of the bargemen or other canal-dwellers, without congratulations. The faces that gazed at the dead baby were noncommittal. When some seismic upheaval brings on abortive travail in the old canals of Tokyo countless forgotten infants will be redelivered. This one, like the other babies thus gotten, was handed over to the police to await investigation and interment in dryer ground ; and then the dredging went on. The next treasure-trove was distinctly more interesting, for it represented not death, but life, and life in a very active form. The dripping water hissed and the mud splattered in all directions. As the scoop relaxed and the contents scattered, something rolled down the side of the mud-heap, flapping and floundering in desperation. It proved to be a kind of devil fish, a nameless creature, unknown to science, but a natural denizen of these nether regions where so much tragedy has birth. To the barge crew it was the one stroke of luck that day, since it could be looked to as a means of reducing food bills. How the devil fish reduced its own food bills was not audibly suggested. The foreman pushed the rebellious captive to a safe place aside for future consideration ; and the dredge continued to unravel the romance of a Tokyo canal.

THE KISS

AN Irish preacher who believed that a sermon, to secure adequate attention, should always open in a striking and impressive manner, began thus one Sunday evening : ‘ Beloved, my sermon to-night may be likened unto a kiss : it has two heads and an application.’ Thus addressed, any company of hearers might well use their heads in pursuance of the parable, if not of its application. But in Japan, where kisses are unknown, the metaphor would be pointless and the parable inept, not for want of heads, but for lack of opportunity for application. In the land of the gods even righteousness and peace do not kiss each other, even though they happen to meet together, which is seldom ; for the kiss, in spite of Occidental influence in the country, remains yet a minus quantity.

It is not so long ago that the whole Japanese capital was seized with a fit of moral consternation over the appearance, at a fine art exhibition, of a French masterpiece in which a kiss was made permanent in marble. The Japanese are, of course, among the most fervent of art lovers, worshipping all beauty, natural or created, but they do not stoop to the art of osculation. Consequently,

when the French Academy offered to lend Rodin's famous sculpture, *Le Baiser*, to the Tokyo Fine Arts Exhibition, the Committee felt obliged, out of courtesy, to accept the spirit of the intention, not knowing, perhaps, that the *motif* would turn out to be so exclusively Occidental as it proved to be on inspection. But no sooner had the masterpiece arrived in the Japanese metropolis, than the police, who, in Japan, are the only censors of morals, declined to risk the effect of placing the statue within reach of the public, except on condition that it be surrounded by a high fence, high enough to conceal from the public eye so dramatic a delineation of Occidental emotion. This was duly done ; and no one was permitted to see the statue save by official order from the guardians of the law. Only by such extreme precaution could the instincts of this divine race be protected from the pollution of Occidental licence, and the corruption of a nation's morals be prevented.

On what principle the censors were to esteem an applicant for permission to survey the aesthetic triumph of the French sculptor fit to be so accommodated does not appear. Obviously it was not a concession extended to minors, but, like tobacco and alcohol, was only for stouter hearts and less susceptible characters. Nor could adults marshal sufficient courage to approach the officer in charge without being in some measure suspected of improper motives ; and if the reasons for their

curiosity were demanded, as possibly they were, exact explanations would be difficult. The officer scrutinized the applicant with infallible care, for there had to be certainty that the results of the concession would not prove inimical to national and even individual ideals; and whenever an applicant, either by looks or remarks, seemed likely to survive exposure to so awful a temptation, a ticket was solemnly issued in recognition of such august immunity to foreign contamination.

Had some epidemic of amorous embraces, or some pernicious habit of kissing, become a bane of Japanese civilization in the past, this preoccupation of the official mind with the risk of social demoralization might be understood. But it was just because the public was unaccustomed to such contactual demonstrations of affection that there had to be ample solicitude not to encourage it. Such is the ingrained sentiment, the rigid practice and the immemorial custom of kissless land. Ah me! the unvisited maidens, wives and mothers of Nippon! To Occidental minds such a society must appear incomprehensible. One hesitates to contemplate the instincts of a civilization where no kiss is innocent; where even the first kiss of love finds neither recognition nor appreciation. In fact, a country without kisses must strike us as the wildest of fancies, an existence not of this world. Nevertheless, the kiss is of Oriental origin, though admittedly more of the

Near than the Far East. Christ was betrayed by a kiss ; notwithstanding which, the kiss became a token of affection and credal unity among the Christians, and, indeed, proved so popular that it tended to scandal and had to cease. The Christian habit of kissing the bride at weddings, still obtaining occasionally in certain parts of the Occident, is probably a relic or survival of the custom. Not only would such an indignity be quite impossible in Japan at a wedding, but no Japanese hero on the fatal field of battle would ever think of saying, as Nelson did when dying, 'Hardy, kiss me.'

It is not that the people of Japan are without personal attachment, and even affection ; but they have other ways of expressing such emotion. Nothing appears to them more lacking in good taste than any public manifestation of affection. However solemn or joyous, there are no kissful occasions in Nippon. And even the kissable have to remain unknissed. Perhaps, in a land that can boast of so many pretty girls, the temptation is so great that the authorities have to beware of making light of it. In the early evolution of Oriental society woman had to be protected like any other property, for the constant tendency of primitive civilization is towards socialism. In Japan the woman is still carefully protected in the domestic circle. The mother takes leave of her son, the wife of her husband, (there are no lovers and sweethearts), as they depart for the field of battle, with only a

bow and a smile ; and when they return, either wounded, in ashes, or unharmed, they are received and welcomed in the same simple manner. No one dares even to blow, much less impart a kiss in kissless land. As yet courtship is only a dream that some day may come true. Love must follow after marriage, if at all. There is no nuptial kiss, so far as the public is aware. The bride leaves her parental roof without a kiss, and also enters her future home without such mark of affection. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends and companions, part, even for ever, without either an embrace or a kiss.

The Japanese are always overcome by a feeling of disgust when they see Occidentals indulge in this form of endearment in public. Officials have a horror of being despatched to European Courts where so repellent a mode of welcome is likely to be bestowed on them. This is the chief reason why most officials prefer to be sent to English-speaking countries. The Japanese nation will never forget a very great occasion when the World Powers sent their highest representatives to Japan to participate in the central function of the greatest State celebration of the event. These distinguished personages had a private consultation to agree on the proper procedure and etiquette to be observed on being welcomed by the Prince Imperial. The majority favoured no more than the usual salute, profound bow, and to shake hands

if the Crown Prince invited it. From this proposal one Princely envoy dissented, declaring that the manners of his country would be good enough for Japan. Consequently, when this august personage approached the Crown Prince of Japan, he stood at attention, saluted, shook hands and then promptly planted a kiss on the Imperial cheek of Japan, to the indignant amazement of the Imperial host and his entire suite. The young Crown Prince stiffened visibly, looked stunned, glanced to one side as if seeking a way of escape, and then assumed a limp aspect as if somewhat faint and breathless. What must it have meant to that young Prince to be kissed for the first time in his life, and by a bristling-bearded foreigner! Recovering his equilibrium in a moment, the Crown Prince proceeded with the ceremony, and then fled to his carriage as if to feel safe from further assault. Japanese officials complacently congratulate themselves whenever they succeed in passing through European diplomatic or military circles without suffering the humiliation of being kissed.

Aversion to kissing is not due wholly to racial, social or moral eccentricity; it has doubtless an instinctive basis in fear of contamination. Nor is the contamination less moral than physical. Japan's imitation of Occidental civilization has, to a large extent, been merely material; public utilities of all kinds have been imported and adopted with some degree of practical adaptation to national needs.

The moral and social habits and customs of the West find acceptance much more slowly and with great caution. There is a wholesome ambition to acquire the good without the evil. But with the influx of foreign ways and means, it is not easy to avoid Western manners and customs, the evil as well as the good. And there is a considerable element in Japanese society that favours the adoption of Occidental domestic and social amenities. It is felt that kissing is bound to come into vogue along with some other evils. That such a habit is undesirable almost all thoughtful Japanese will admit.

On this account the question of dealing with foreign films has become one of grave concern to the Japanese police. The amount of kissing that characterizes these films is deprecated as a temptation to an imitative people like the Japanese. As there are few Occidental films without kisses, it was seen that prohibition of such shows would ruin the kinema halls ; so the police hit upon the plan of importing the films and then eliminating the kisses and other morally compromising situations depicted therein. Each film, before being exhibited in public, has to pass the censor, who paints out the parts to which he takes exception. Thus, during the exhibition of the censored film, the alleged examples of Occidental indecency disappear behind streaks of blackness, amid uproarious laughter from the spectators, while the interpreter and translator of the piece, standing

beside the screen, rolls his eyes heavenwards as if seeking the mercy of the gods.

Not content with these safeguards, the officers of the law, lest the youths and maidens, who flock in great numbers to witness the pranks and antics of Occidental society, should be tempted to cast wrongful glances at each other, in the dusk of the movie halls, have the auditorium divided into three parts ; the left for spinsters, the middle for married couples, and the right for bachelors. Bachelors and spinsters, thus separated, are supposed to be less inimically affected when witnessing the vices of an inferior civilization. Not until the importation of the movies were the sexes in Japan permitted to meet in the dark. At the back of the hall stands an officer of the law, with a sword at his hip, to see that all present are in their proper places and properly behaving while the lights are dimmed. And yet everyone knows that many of those occupying seats in the middle portion of the hall are not married, nor are all those to the right or left of the centre respectively bachelors and spinsters. On this account now, some of the more modern halls are departing from this rigid custom of dividing the sexes.

There is no influence that has done so much to lower Occidental civilization in the eyes of the Japanese, and indeed of all Asia, as the kinema hall. The public imagines that it there beholds the most advanced civilization of the West, the

cream of Christendom, more especially of America and England, whereas the fact is that what is thus exhibited never really happens in English-speaking countries outside of the film factories; indeed much of it would never be permitted to happen in general life. In any case it is a reflection of the lowest strata of Occidental society, and not at all typical of Western life. But the Oriental public, taking this for Occidental civilization at its best, must inevitably lose any respect it ever had for Western nations. And yet it is the West itself that is thus teaching the East to think of it. Throughout India, China and Japan imported films are used to show the rising generation that it has nothing uplifting to learn from the white races, its would-be teachers. A more purblind policy could not be imagined than the present one of allowing our morally compromising films to disgrace and libel us before all Asia, to say nothing of their injury to Asiatic civilization itself. In Japan the only good expected to come of them is that they will at least show the superiority of Japanese to Occidental society in manners and morals. Thus led to think more highly of their own civilization, the Japanese will not be so ready to abandon it for the abandoned conduct of the West. The censor may cleanse the story of unsavory deeds and indecent situations, but he cannot purify its corrupting atmosphere and its general presentation of a society too vile for toleration anywhere.

Japan's objection to kissing and shaking hands has its physical no less than its social and moral implications. They put aside local affection and look at things in a larger way ; for the Orient likes to be wisely on the safe side, if it knows. Unfortunately it does not always know, and permits a great deal that is more contaminating than kissing. In a civilization where contagious disease is so common, physical contact is often undesirable. There is no doubt that aversion to kissing and hand-shaking tends to prevent the spread of various maladies. Diseases that come by contact are less easily avoided than those that come by water. There are those people who believe that the Japanese custom in this respect could be imported with advantage in the West.

Some of the larger centres of population in Japan, like Tokyo and Osaka, are introducing the cabarets and dance-halls of Occidental origin ; and the new diversion is giving the police as much worry as the films, because dancing between the sexes has hitherto not been tolerated in Japan. Such a custom has been regarded as vulgar if not immoral. Nor would it be now allowed, save that it attracts foreigners to gay quarters more readily than the old method of the *geisha* house. Japanese gentlemen, who would not think of allowing their own women folk to dance with one of the opposite sex, nor would themselves be seen doing such a thing at home, indulge in this form

of recreation and amusement when they go abroad ; and these do not see why dancing should not now be allowed in Japan. But so new a custom doubtless has its perils for Japanese society. The police not only keep a sharp eye on the dance-halls to see that respectable girls do not frequent them, but even oblige them to close by ten o'clock at night, an hour when such places are only beginning to be busy in Western countries.

So long as kissing, even in sculpture, is taboo and has to be fenced in, and nude statuary accommodated with aprons in Japanese art galleries, and dances carefully chaperoned by the police, it is difficult to see how young Japan can err greatly in public, however morally aberrant it may be in private. A policy of suppression, instead of elimination, is the weakness of most civilizations. It is the silent and unseen forces that do the mischief. It has long been the boast of the ethical teachers of Japan that the nation has no moral code, nor does it need one ; for the children of the gods are born moral, and all that is necessary is for them to follow natural instinct and tradition to be perfect. Moral codes apparently are for breeds less fortunate in origin and evolution, and without the law. The position is ambiguous and apt to lead to moral confusion. It is certainly essential that at least righteousness and peace should kiss each other.

THE BLOSSOMS

A LAND abounding in pretty girls and matchless flowers must needs be a place of enchantment and charm. Japan is such, indeed, to a very large extent. There can be no two opinions about the wealth and beauty of the blossoms. The nation betrays an almost unique preference for blossoming shrubs, as against flowering plants. Though the imperial crest is the chrysanthemum, the national blossom is that of the cherry. But the exuberance of flowers and blossoms of all kinds is endless, wild, as well as cultivated. Almost every month of the year has its wonted blooms. Spring begins in February, especially in the south, during which the plum puts forth its pearl-pink buds on yet leafless grey twigs and branches, outshining even the late snows. Later come the almond blossoms ; and soon the cherry buds begin to burst in ruby hues all over the bare branches of the waiting trees kissed by the warm sun, until, by the first week in April, the entire landscape is one white cloud of filmy-misted bloom. Of this favourite flower there are two main varieties, known as the single and the double blossoms ; the former is by far the more popular, being universally regarded

as the national emblem, typical of the true *samurai* spirit, which is ready to die when the time comes, yet always comes back when the time comes, and so is as deathless as the true soldier.

One of the most patriotic of the national poets, Motoöri, has left a verse finely expressive of his country's sentiment for the cherry blossom :

If any would know the heart of Nippon,
Let him gaze at the blossom of the cherry,
Exhaling its glory in the morning sun !

Nor could any symbol more appropriately suggest the Japanese Spirit, known as *Yamato Damashii*. No one that has once beheld the glowing opalescence of the blossoming cherry on a fine April morning can ever forget its exquisite beauty. How far the Japanese spirit approaches to this sublimity is, perhaps, a question unnecessary to discuss. The national appreciation is naturally more aesthetic than moral ; but we have to remember that in Japan aesthetics are morals. Any attitude to nature is better than mere indifference. All self-interest is eliminated, for the cherry bears no fruit. It is simply and only a thing of beauty, without even the commercial advantage of the rose, bred to grace exhibitions and great occasions. Of course the cherry blossoms are not wholly without economic value, for the places where they can best be seen draw immense

crowds in season, giving the tea-houses and inns a thriving trade. Then ethics and aesthetics blend in a grand carnival of feasting and flower-viewing.

The national custom of going to gaze upon the beauty of the cherry blossoms, a duty incumbent on all Japanese, is known as *hanami*, or flower-viewing ; it really implies blossom worship ; for the people do worship the beauty of the cherry blossoms, as an incarnation of a divine spirit. Consequently, in season, a very large proportion of the population manages to take a day off in order to join in parties, picnics and excursions, that set out daily to famous places to spend from five to ten hours beneath the blooming trees, revelling in the environing beauty. Nothing could be more fascinatingly picturesque than these gay crowds of men and maidens, of all ages, clad in holiday attire, blue or purple, grey or gold, moving about in vivacious converse and reckless gaiety under canopies of bloom. Herein is felt a charm not experienced in other lands, not in England since the decline of the maypole dance and the festivities of 'merrie England.' Certainly no other country presents such teeming multitudes enamoured of the spirit of Spring. For *hanami* is the most sacred of devotions, and none the less so because charged with song and unencumbered laughter.

Other blossoms, and many of them, there are too, as has been suggested, all coming into bloom

as the season advances and spring merges into summer. The empire being nearly 2,000 miles long, running north and south, Japan has all the climates between Russia and Egypt, so that the blossoms do not all appear simultaneously over the country. By starting in the south and travelling slowly northwards, the tourist may have cherry blossoms through most of March and April. Through May, June and July the country is all aglow with other blossoms : azaleas, white, blue, purple or red, all along the roads and hillsides, as well as in parks and private gardens. Almost every dwelling has its trellis of wisteria ; and it may be seen climbing lofty cliffs in the mountains, running riotously over vast and dizzy spaces of rock, with its giant purple clusters suspended in countless numbers, some of them from two to three feet in length. Nor would one omit mention of the camelia, the magnolia and the japonica, which may be seen adorning even hillsides and hedgerows as well as parks and gardens. Hills, downs and moors, too, are covered with a wealth of wild flowers of every colour, but oftenest of purple and gold ; and frequently a whole firmament of lilies stretching away like endless eastertide. The iris also is nowhere more lovely than in Japan, iris purple, iris golden, iris variegated with magic hues and tints elsewhere unknown. Roses are cultivated in a few gardens, but mainly by horticulturists for the market created by foreigners

and the few Japanese who imitate them. The rose is not esteemed by native taste, as it is too suggestive of obesity. It is probably for the same reason that the Japanese prefer flowering shrubs to flowering plants, and the cherry to the chrysanthemum. Nor is there much demand for cut flowers except for altars and graves ; the cut flower symbolizes sadness. National taste runs generally to budding or blossoming sprays, if cut at all ; and these are placed in a vase in the *tokonoma*, in accordance with the national art of flower arrangement known as *ikebana*, the accomplishment of every Japanese lady. This art implies a profound acquaintance with the individuality of flowers, and how to place them that by their poise they may express their proper spirit, for each flower is believed to possess a definite and distinct individuality of its own.

But while *ikebana* is practised the whole year around, and taught in all schools for girls, utilizing slips cut from even flowerless plants, the worship of the cherry blossom, *hanami*, has its own time and season of universal delight, because it ushers in the spring when all life revives and nature resumes her wonted glory, affecting the entire nation. Then through the hazy atmosphere so delicately laden with delicious fragrance, and tinted with celestial colours, the mellow sunlight falls on numberless happy companies seated in entrancement under the starry branches. Those

are the true dreamland days when it seems only right and natural to let worship supplant work, and play replace dull toil, for the hours pass all too quickly unnoticed. To refuse even a servant time for *hanami* would be about as mean as to dock wages for time taken to get married. As friend meets friend, for days previously, the invariable question is 'Have you been to do *hanami* ?' No one ever makes the mistake of asking 'Where ?' or 'How ?' or 'What flowers ?' In *hanami* time there is only one species of blossom, and only one good place to see it ; and at any time 'the flowers' always refers to the cherry blossom, as if no other deserved the name. The best place is always the conventional place of the locality. In a land where all ornamental trees along the streets are cherry, and where one sees blossoms everywhere, often passing through tunnels of them, the question of the best place for *hanami* is rather puzzling to the foreigner not yet initiated into the Japanese spirit. To be asked if you have gone to see what you have been gazing at in admiration every day along the streets and highways, as you go about, seems at first like a jest. But in Japan to claim that you have seen 'the flowers' without having done *hanami* is like saying you have been to Church when you have only inspected the building.

Even the emperor and empress celebrate *hanami* by giving a grand garden party at one of the

detached palaces in the capital, where a brilliant gathering of over 2,000 guests representing the élite of the nation is invited annually to observe the festival. At the Hama palace, or the Shinjuku gardens, is the best place to see the imperial blossoms ; for there the ancient trees are historic and the blossoms ancestral and ideal, having shed their beauty on a long succession of imperial generations. Words fail adequately to convey the aesthetic effect of this incomparable occasion. The foreign guest finds himself lost in mystic wonder in that assemblage of exquisitely costumed ladies, each a blossom in herself, loitering under canopies of faintly scented bloom, wide-spreading trees that through the centuries have never failed annually to renew their wondrous beauty. At last the imperial party emerges in the distance, to the strains of the National Anthem ; and all the guests fall into line and follow the imperial procession further into the flowery arcade, past fantastic grottoes, and tiny lakes that reflect, as if by magic, the vari-coloured dresses and uniforms, as if in a kaleidoscope. One moves past purring waterfalls forming little streams that murmur their way lakeward, with miniature mountains rising beyond. At last one has arrived in an open space with a great marquee, set with well-laden tables, a dais at the upper end for their Majesties.

Summer comes all too soon ; and then scarcely less alluring than the cherry blossoms is the lotus.

The atmosphere is hot and humid, enabling the giant blossoms to burst and blush with warmth and health. One of the most refined amusements of the Tokyo élite, especially those of poetic temperament, is to rise at dawn and go out to hear the blossoms open with a pop in the lotus ponds, of which there are many in the capital. Such a pond in some big park forms a favourite resort for lovers of this pleasure ; for there the stillness of the early morning remains longest unbroken, and the unique and enchanting echo of the bursting buds is the more easily detected. Mounting one of the graceful bridges that arch some indent of the lake, the eerie listener faces a glassy surface marked here and there by large pink buds rising like tulips among the basin-like lotus leaves ; if there be a wind, blue-green wavelets of velvet softness sway the many bowls upturned to catch the moisture and the dews of the past night. Here and there are seen big blossoms of pink or pure white, the offspring of the previous day, and now decorating a sea of green. The watcher on the bridge concentrates an eye on the larger soft plump buds, with the crimson just bleeding through, indicating that at any moment they may pop open, to the exquisite delight of ear and eye. There is no sound on earth so divinely sweet as the birth-cry of a lotus blossom. The note is as inimitable as the voice of a god.

It is no marvel if in Japan the lotus has had a

more religious significance than even the cherry blossom. Some Japanese like to drink tea made from cherry petals, but even more like to eat lotus root. But the lotus occupies a place more symbolic than material in the economy of the nation. The Japanese are not quite so happy-go-lucky a people as Tennyson's lotus eaters, nor is life with them always afternoon, save perhaps in a Buddhist sense ; for Buddhism is a religion of dreams if not illusions ; and the lotus is the favourite flower of that cult. The numerous statues of Amida, to be seen all over Japan, usually have a lotus pedestal, symbolic of divinity rising out of the earth, as the lotus does out of the mud. Man may thus triumph over self if he acquiesces in the extinction of desire. The lotus also suggests the brevity of life's existence here ; for in a few days all the blossoms are over, and their beauty remains but a memory. Therein lies a fatal fascination for those menaced by despair. Sometimes, when a poet goes out at early morn to hear the lotus born, they catch sight of a lonely figure silhouetted against the golden dawn, gazing down among the yet unopened lotus buds. Approaching, he may see nothing but silken skirts floating among the leaves. The lotus glories in the morning sun ; at sunset it closes. Thus, too, the lonely watcher of its birth comes not to see it born, but to see it die, and to die with it, life sealed in its own agony. The diamond drops that dazzle and

roll about in the green lotus bowls, as they wave in the wind at twilight, suggest hollow pathways wet with tears. The lotus is the most conspicuous blossom at all funerals ; it decorates all Buddhist altars, pointing to the unseen. In strange contrast to Japanese taste, otherwise, it is usually artificial, a mere painted flower, as lifeless as the altar statue, or as the poor body in the coffin. There is a general belief that where the lotus is, even in picture, no evil can come. All the dead are gods in lotus-land ; and thither the lotus points all who are afflicted with unendurable despair.

THE INSECT

AMONG people with faith in the doctrine of metempsychosis the insect becomes a reality of quite human importance. The implication is that your relation to an insect may possibly be something more than one of taste, or of mere proximity ; the insect may be an impersonation of your departed, but now returned mother or grandmother, father or grandfather, or other blood connexion, according to the degree in which it appears to feel dependent upon you for blood relationship. The law of *kharmā* is inexorable ; human suckers are condemned without mercy to become insect suckers, if not some other form of reincarnation, in the ensuing probation. Therefore man must not be too hard on insects ; they have to live, just as their ancestors had. The situation is rather awkward. Parasiticide may turn out to be parricide. Fortunately embarrassment is not so common as might be anticipated. Insects are, for the most part, left to look after themselves, unless they insist overmuch on looking after their still incarnate relatives, and then everybody is ready to be his brother's keeper.

If the insect world of Japan is in any sense a transmigration of the past, democracy is obviously

older than the Labour Movement, older than even Puritanism, for the insect world is, above all else, a democratic society, and has been so from antiquity ; it is nothing if not locomotor and ubiquitous ; and it does mostly what it likes, is very familiar and voracious. Moreover, it is phenomenally prolific, if fecundity can be taken as a democratic trait. It is also strongly disposed to communism, for it creates a society where everything you have, including yourself, belongs to someone else, unless you watch it.

In the Orient the term insect is far more comprehensive than in the Occident. It covers an infinite variety of species that crawl, creep, leap and fly, from tortoises, crabs and lobsters to flies, fleas and other unmentionables, in a diminishing scale till they vanish in the realm of bacteria. Insects, like gods, are as myriad in kinds as in number. The Orient simply swarms with them, most of them endowed with that one touch of nature that makes the whole world akin. There are big ones and little ones, but mainly little ones : insects that are obstacles and insects that are merely a nuisance or only disgusting ; insects that are soloists, preferring not only to sing, but also to dine alone ; insects that incline to orchestral movement in sound as well as in sense. Especially keen is their sense of a human presence ; they not only like an audience, but one that pays. Here, at any rate, one cannot but be sensible

of reincarnations, recent and true to life. Spiritualists seem undecided as to what change death brings ; but souls consigned to reincarnation in the insect life of the Orient do not appear to reveal any change in the direction of repentance : they are true to the life of the past. Nor have they adopted the Buddhist tenet of a desire for the extinction of all desire ; in fact, they appear more obsessed with desire than ever. Transmigration must be a healthy process, if it so vastly improves appetite.

At first you know not whether to be more amazed at insects so Brobdinagian that one alone can shock or even horrify the boldest of European ladies, or so Liliputian that one can comfortably sing inside your ear while you are trying to get to sleep. Some are so stealthy and pointed that they can imperceptibly take cover, attack and pierce the human hide and yet succeed in remaining provokingly diminutive and invisible, so that the victim instinctively wishes for a larger antagonist. Insects there are, too, that scuttle away on sight, darting into unexpected hiding places, while others as defiantly stand at bay and actually pray not to be molested. There are insects that chirp like the highest note on a piano, and insects that strum like a badly tuned 'cello, or merely jazz till you are on the verge of desperation. When all these combine, or coalesce, into an evening orchestra the result is less like bagpipes than a Chinese band, but no more socially or

aesthetically satisfactory than either. But, after all, these are not so objectionable as the still more impressive hosts that do not sing or play at all, but just *work*, unfortunates, perhaps, of an inadequate dole, or a dole docked because of work ; it may be that they are reincarnations of the antique age of toil when men were so energetic that even after work, they did not sing or play, had no sense of sport, but went on still prospecting and poking about until they were hungry again, to the perpetual annoyance of those who had to feed them. Clearly these insects are reincarnations of a class that never knows when it has had enough, its only virtue being that it obviously does work for what it gets, and yet leaves the payer the poorer. There is an energy that makes no adequate return save to the energizer. Evidently such reincarnations are of souls before the days of labour unions, for there appears to be no objection to working over-time. Happily not all Japanese insects are obsessed with the idea that the entire population of the country desires to lose weight, or to promote reincarnation by becoming discarnate for charity's sake.

Many flying insects delight to soar over the water of ponds, lakes and rivers ; and of these many can alight on water surface more deftly than a seaplane, trotting about overseas no less easily than overland, tempting fishes no less than other insectivora to end their reincarnation period

in defiance of *kharmā*. A good appetite and an equal courage and skill may do much in deciding destiny, even among transmigrants. The most disconcerting insects are those that bound and vault wherever luck takes them, reincarnations of a generation more athletic than the kangaroo and the greyhound, the Olympian heroes of bygone generations, who gave so much time to sport that they had none for angelic flight, leaving that to the inferior days of flying men. Other insects are content merely to find themselves transported wherever their hosts take them, while others, less prone to take risks, have their prey brought to them where they occupy vantage points in the beds of inns or the upholstery of railway carriages. These often cause delicate and timid guests to blush so much, even during sleep, that in the morning they are surprised to find their complexion unevenly distributed. Up the wall or across the ceiling the sleeper opens his eyes to perceive wondrous spiders crawling slowly in pursuit of lazy insects; these spiders have head offices small enough to suggest that their ancestors may have been named Peabody, were it not that their six legs are each ten times the length of the body. These will never reach the wireless age, for they depend on their legs to keep them posted as to food prospects within their radius.

It appears that the smaller the insect the more does it multiply and deplete the earth. The

familiarity of these insects, not only with the persons, but also with the habits of the race they are doomed to reincarnate, is both impressive and marked. After the season of the insect festival the marking is too general to be remarkable. Those most aggressive in seeking acquaintance with foreigners are no less affectionate and attentive, betraying often the most inordinate predelection for Occidental taste. Judged by their appetites, you would suppose these Oriental insects not to be well fed at home ; yet it cannot be for either want of fare or for opportunity to secure it, unless, indeed, they be vegetarians, under Buddhist influence, and only tempted to a carnivorous diet by the presence of Occidental surloin. Or possibly carnivorous insects do not care for bodies fed on vegetables, and consequently rush to regale themselves on the flesh-nourished physique of the Occident. Even when foraging among Occidentals the more intimate of these pests reveal extraordinary discrimination ; for, if they find two possible victims, they invariably select but one, as if under the impression that one table is better served than the other ; or possibly, being friends, they desire to find themselves altogether at the same board. On the other hand it may be that from surfeiting they have merely become fastidious and epicurean. Everywhere in Japan great importance is attached to the odour of foods, and reincarnations of the race

cannot be expected to evince less taste. At all events, this is the reason why all Occidentals like to travel in parties when touring the Far East, in the hope (too often vain) that some of the party will not prove to be the chosen people, or not the board selected. Hostelrys much frequented by foreigners, are well aware of the Occidental aversion to taking boarders, and these places are immune to invisible guests. For general travel over unbeaten tracks, however, the 'party' spirit prevails, to the great profit of the tourist agencies who plan and conduct such parties. At one of the principal watering places officialdom has put up this sign, in alleged English: 'The principal occupation of the principal inhabitants of this place is peacefully feeding upon tourists.' If the poster be ambiguous it is none the less candid.

On first arriving in Japan, feeling myself a virgin hunting-ground for insects fasting because they were fed-up by too monotonous a diet, I amused myself one afternoon by taking instruction concerning the significance of the various cries heard along the streets all day long. 'What is that cry?' I asked my instructor. That was the fishmonger, I was told. The next was the cry of the vegetable vendor; another was that of the man who peddles cut flowers; another was the bean-curd seller; yet another announced his ability to disinfect or renew the stems of tobacco pipes; another repaired footgear; and thus it went

on, till one came along selling insects, a trade puzzling to me, but it turned out that his stock-in-trade was not venomous or even ravenous insects, but those merely musical : he was selling singing insects in tiny cages. They were not automatic, however ; if you wanted them to sing you had to feed them, but you had the advantage of choosing when, how and wherewith they were to be fed. Next came a cry that even my instructor did not appear quite to understand ; it was a harsh, cackling voice, as if hoarse from dust, yet gleeful with mischief. The more anxious my curiosity to ascertain what it meant, the more my informant smiled and feigned ignorance. I could make no progress until I appealed to a fellow Occidental later ; he intimated, in rather a confidential tone, that, while this call was not exactly the 'call of the wild,' it approached it : it was the call of the 'insect man.' That could not be, I protested, for I had already heard the 'insect man.' Ah ! but that was the man who sold singing insects ; this was the man who, if he did not buy biting insects, at least undertook to remove them for a consideration. Here was a man who went around destroying ancestral reincarnations, which accounted for the spell he cast nightly upon the community, and silenced my native instructors. He apparently mystified the entire community, incarnate and reincarnate. Who could help holding such a one in awe ?

This is an example of the new discoveries that the careful traveller is always making in the Orient. Lecturers, journalists and tourists, ignore such additions to knowledge, and even naturalists and theologians do not face such facts. It was a relic of the old, old days when, if relations became a nuisance, they simply killed them. The 'bugger,' as he is called, is one of the oldest callings in the East. In the West it has died out, not altogether for want of work, but for want of wages, owing to the high cost of living. But in the East even the smallest sum of money is of more value than none. Everybody is after money ; it is essential to life. If men cannot get it any other way, they will deprive their reincarnate ancestors of life, for a living. It seems almost inhumane to slay those making a living so naturally ; if feeding be not toiling, they toil not neither do they spin, yet no king was ever better fed. Then there appears a creature whom money drives to molest them ; and so money becomes the end of their communism. But in Japan there is no law against a man making money by preventing insects living on charity. Karma plays queer pranks ; it ignores race, space and time. Who knows that this 'bugger' may not have been himself a reincarnation, transmigrated to the East from the Europe of the old days ?

This Japanese professional went up and down the streets at bedtime every night assuring the

public, in a loud voice, that if the restless, that is, the flea-bitten or bug-bitten, would only summon him to the rescue, he would 'Keating' away the root cause of their discomfort and induce refreshing sleep, which always comes after exercise. He had the magic means to paralyse the jaws of even the most hardy biter. Since the European war the 'buggers' of the Orient have grown callous in regard to insect reincarnations, and have been advertising poison gas as more destructive than powder; a method adopted by the most civilized nations for getting rid of people who made themselves a nuisance, could legitimately be used for good riddance of troublesome reincarnations. Keating will be obliged to remodel his laboratory to retain his great custom in Oriental munition shops. But there persists a sad doubt, withal; for poison gas is not yet accepted as a legitimate weapon against one's own people; it can be used only on foreigners with impunity. If karma would only reveal how to determine whether the reincarnations were native or foreign there would be at least the satisfaction of choosing between civil and international warfare. The callous 'bugger' kills all alike without respect to descent. And is he not subsidized by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children? In Europe he would be prosecuted by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The *nankin mushi* (bug), one of the most

pestiferous and defiant of man-eaters, is affirmed by the Japanese to be of Chinese origin, as the local name denotes ; but the no less avid *nomi* (flea) is undoubtedly a home-bred product of great efficiency, and keeps the 'insect man' no less busy a-nights. The *nomi* is not only as vicious a bed-fellow as his celestial colleague, but equally a carrier of skin and other affections common in the Orient. Scarcely less of a nuisance is the tiny gnat known to us as the mosquito, but which the Japanese call the *ka*, though it resembles the crow only by being able to fly everywhere and to be everywhere mischievous. The only sure remedy against the proletarian *ka* is kerosene sprinkled in the marshy or other water haunts where it breeds ; but that is an almost impossible task in a land covered by paddy-fields where the rice grows. In cities, however, this insect propagates in the stagnant water of countless flower vases in temple cemeteries, as well as in the usual open sewers of towns and villages. The main defence against full fledged broods is to suspend a net over the bed at night ; but even with this precaution, it is not uncommon on waking in the morning to find one or two mosquitoes inside the net, red and lazy after a night's drinking. The *ka* is obviously not a Buddhist reincarnation, for he may be kept at bay by burning incense near the bed. On one occasion an old gentleman and his wife, who were guests at an inn, rejected a net as preventing a

proper circulation of air, and also the incense as befouling the atmosphere, only to find that in the morning the man's bald head was ornamented with red and irritating eruptions. He was angry and threatened to depart from the inn; but the landlord pacified him by offering a bottle of mosquito lotion to keep beside the bed for use in case of provocation. The insects being in ambush when the old couple retired to bed, they soon went to sleep; but later the old man was awaked by the singing and sipping, and made a grab for the lotion which he smeared all over his face, head and hands, and then fell back to rest feeling armour proof. He knew nothing more until he was suddenly aroused next morning by the piercing shrieks of his wife who was screaming 'murder!' It appeared that it was the ink bottle her husband had got hold of in the night, instead of the lotion, and when she opened her eyes to behold a black man beside her in bed, she could only cry out in terror.

In addition to creeping and leaping things that bite, there are flying creatures that menace the human skin, such as the *buyu*, a fly larger than the English midge, though hardly less courageous and persistent, the bite of which is sufficiently poisonous to cause a badly swollen arm or leg if repeated often enough. There is also a huge insect like an Occidental horse-fly, called the *abu*, which has crafty ways of attack, and is able

to extract a piece of human flesh with its fangs. This villain comes into the house almost noiselessly, through a window or other aperture, when you are reading or otherwise indifferent to him, alights on your collar, surveys your neck, grips the collar firmly and bends over to sink in his fangs, allowing you to pull out the mouthful by brushing him away. If he fails to take you by the neck he will repeat his approach otherwise. I have seen the *abu* alight like a yellow flower petal on a lady's thin *habutæ* blouse, allured doubtless by the rosy tints glowing through the filmy transparency, pause a moment to feel the warmth beneath (for he has to guess whether the silk is against the flesh or not), and if it seems doubtful, he takes a gentle walk and guesses again; feeling assured, he bows and drives in his fangs, points together, through the silk. Should he not succeed in getting his bite, he appears shocked and disappointed, looks about to realize where he is, and what he is about; and then, sulking for a moment, he strolls along the lady's back up to the border of her gauzy garment, balances himself safely on the hem and bends over for a bite at her neck, just as some considerate companion, fellow passenger or worshipper, behind or beside her, flips him away unsatisfied, to the lady's surprise and unstinted gratitude. The *abu* loves a lady, or, more accurately, lady. Once I saw a Japanese youth grow so excited, when he saw an *abu* about to secure

a piece of a pretty girl, that he thought it rude to appraise her of the danger, but not to plump a broad and vigorous thumb flat on the creature and squash it on her blouse. That was just how not to do it, but it was done ; and the lady's gratitude could be seen undergoing considerable modification as she felt a peculiar dampness changing the temperature on her back.

Under the auspices of the new fashions adopted by Occidental women residing in Japan, the *abu* is having the time of his life ; he has enlarged his harem and, of course, his family. The entire *abu* tribe is revelling in the opportunities afforded by short skirts to batten on thinly clad calves and ankles. He and his family are uninvited guests at all afternoon teas, picnics and tennis parties, as well as faithful attendants on ladies at Church on still Sunday mornings. In the breathless quiet of a prayerful attitude in Church on a hot Sunday the *abu* finds the temptation irresistible. Then the windows are all open, the air is motionless and humid ; the parson conducting the service is just audible enough to duplicate and neutralize the drone of an *abu* gliding into the church ; but once the addition to the congregation is realized, no longer are wandering thoughts possible, for all minds are concentrated on the *abu*, seen or unseen. He soars about over the heads of the people, flying high to escape detection, until he sees an open field of white shoulders or silk stockings,

and there he selects an aerodrome. But he drops down so suddenly, silently and invisibly, that no one is quite sure whose calf he has selected. Every female face is now at the utmost tension, and all female hands are affectionately massaging their calves and ankles. Even the men can seldom afford to be disinterested, for the *abu* has a habit of pleasantly disappointing the ladies by leaving them to attend to their precious calves and ankles while he hops across to the ankle of a neighbouring gentleman instead. Sometimes the suspense is awful, until someone confesses by abnormal behaviour, that he or she is the victim; and if there be more than one *abu*, as often proves true, the tension is increased. Relief comes not until the enemy gets within reach of some batsman who knocks over the *abu* with a hymnbook or his hand, and after hearing the impact all breathe freely until the *abu* revives or is followed by some of his inquisitive family.

If the *abu* is averse to prayerful moods, that is not true of all Japanese insects, for the praying-mantis is ostensibly a devout fellow, though his devotions may be as much a matter of form as if he were a disciple of Islam. The mantis is a long, olive-green transmigrant, sometimes extending to four or five inches; he has remarkably prolonged hind legs, shaped, and kept in the same position, as those of a grasshopper, as if ready to spring upon you, while his two very short fore

legs he holds out before him, close together like two beseeching hands, as if in prayer, even his very limited countenance assuming an impressively devotional attitude. Being literally a pacifist, prayer is apparently his only defence ; and yet, even ladies are not partial to him, for they have discovered him to be a disgusting hypocrite. All his prayers appear to be for himself, in which, of course, he is a perfect heathen ; for he does not hesitate to relax his devotional attitude and, with those innocent hands of his, seize insects smaller and less stoutly reincarnate than himself, to their undoing. And so he is a pagan after all ; and nice ladies do not like pagans. In fact the apparent innocence of his manners renders the praying-mantis all the more dangerous to harmless insects coming within his reach. He finds that religion pays, which is another proof of his heathenism.

But not many hypocrites are found among the insect families of Japan ; most of them aspire sincerely and sincerely seek their aims. According to the laws of *kharmā* all reincarnations must naturally continue the failings that human flesh is heir to. Yet there are truly a great number of pleasant insects in Japan, reincarnations of the beautiful and the harmless, wonderful moths and butterflies of all sizes and colours ; indeed no country has such an endless variety of them. The fascinating variegated moths that haunt the night lights on house verandas are examples of

beauty that remain a joy for ever. I have always preferred to see these moths and butterflies enjoy life, true to their innocent nature, than to treasure their mummified carcasses in any elaborate collection to decorate, or furnish, some vain-glorious museum. A vision of unearthly beauty is the dragon-fly, shooting hither and thither in the bright sun, black and red, purple and gold, and many other colours. This lovely creature delights to dance by sunlit ponds in the presence of children, in memory of the happy days before his reincarnation. As down he glides to view his face in the pond, the children pray that some day they will all be gladsome dragon-flies, the *tombo* of the water side.

In the *doyo* season, the dogdays, when the heat is more intense and humid than is ever felt in the Occident, the first wave of high temperature is heralded by an orchestra of *semi*, a kind of cicada ; but Europe has no such singing cicada as the Japanese *semi*, who would have charmed even Theocritus. Of these enormous insects, too, there is an impressive variety, each species resembling an ordinary house fly of gigantic proportions, at least between two and three inches long, and with a song of its own. All *semi* sing in the true Oriental minor tone in which the Japanese delight. While the *semi* sings he uses his enormous diaphragm in the fashion of a trained elocutionist or soloist, and at the same time plays his own accompani-

ment by using his legs as fiddlebows on his wings. The result upon the human ear is more deafening than the filing of many saws, indeed quite phenomenal to one not accustomed to it. The *haru semi*, as the name implies, strikes up its music with the first warmth of spring; later is heard the *abura semi*, the name indicative of the song it sings, a voice that sounds like the sizzling of oil in a frying pan, a note that makes a hungry man's mouth water. And to hungry men he often sings and plays, for, after all, he may be the reincarnation of a cynic. Every species of *semi* has a distinctive music.

No one can hear the *semi* sing and go on working, a circumstance very agreeable to the Japanese in *semi* weather, for it sings only in the heat. The song of this insect uncannily suggests the degree of lassitude the human frame actually feels in a hot and humid atmosphere, expressing the worker's feelings with such exactitude that on hearing it he instinctively throws down his tools, lights his pipe and listens, panting, like the insect itself, with pure gratitude for a moment to pause and breathe. Yet no degree of vanity could persuade him that the insect is a sufficient reincarnation of his kind to be striking his strident notes for merely human benefit; he is simply singing a love ditty to his mate, as his ancestors did before him; and his mate sings to him a reply across the open spaces. Perching himself in some tall tree, or under the eave of your dwelling, the *semi* shrills

forth his sizzling notes with such frenzied utterance that you would suppose his heart would break, his body burst, or your ear-drums give way. But his machinery appears none the worse for his strenuous efforts, no matter how intense the vibration. The louder he shrills the better he likes it ; the hotter the sun the more enraptured he sounds, until sheer exhaustion brings peace.

O measureless depth of heat !

O ceaseless shrilling of *semi* :

A sound like the hissing of fire

Against the motionless clouds !

So sings the Japanese poet. There is one species of *semi* that dislikes the full force of the summer sun ; he plays and sings only at early dawn and again at sunset, and so is known as the *bigurashi*, or twilight *semi*. When his note sounds shrill and clear across the fields at dawn, the toiler knows it is time to rise and prepare for work ; and when that sound returns through the waning sunlight the labourer knows it is time to hurry home through sunset's deepening glow, remembering, perhaps, another poet's lines :

O *bigurashi*, yours is the call of the evening !

Alas ! another day gone, and so little worth doing is done !

In addition to the *semi* the Japanese have numerous other insect musicians, though the *semi* is certainly the loudest and most impressive in

the insect choir, unless the frog be considered, for the voice of the frog is equally loud in the land, though fortunately at night, after the *semi* has relapsed into silence and rest. Then, too, crickets and other denizens of the grass hold forth with frogs in deafening profusion. For the cultivated ear the *matsumushi* chaunts his delicate music in the pine trees ; and from the coverlids at night, as sleep steals near, the bell-like notes of the tiny *suzumushi* charm the ear, making every Japanese homesick, having gone to sleep to this nightly note from infancy. These and numerous others make a not intolerable music where the musical faculty is not yet fully developed. But is it not something to have an ear for nature's music ? One cannot but be struck by the remarkable degree of pleasure which the Japanese take in these rude insect voices, finding them not harsh or shrill or merely noisy, as we do, but welcome to the ear no matter how long or in what manner they chime ; for are they not all ministering spirits sent to help those who are heirs of salvation ? So profound is the appreciation of insect music that it is made the model adopted by all vocalists and instrumentalists, who cultivate the resonance of metal and weld it into music, a music not devoid of such sweetness as the *semi* gives. About it all there is a characteristic note of melancholy that well accords with passing time and anticipated reincarnation.

THE DOG

THE Japanese dog, generally speaking, is not unlike that species so aptly described by the Canadian Indian who, when asked what breed his dog was, replied 'Him part terrier.' 'Part terrier?' exclaimed the Englishman who made the inquiry, and who was keen on breeds: 'And what is the other part?' 'Oh-o-o, just dawg,' said the Indian, without further evidence of interest. Well, most of these animals in Japan are 'just dog,' a few, more, and a few, less; and all are treated accordingly.

In England 'dog' is scarcely any longer a term of obloquy, for dogs have, apparently, much improved since Shakespeare's day, possibly more than their masters. The old aphorism, 'going to the dogs' has lost all derogatory implication. In some sections of society it means no more than going to see dogs racing after electric hares, a form of mental diversion to which Japan has not yet arisen, though such fads were conspicuous in the days of the decadence under the later shoguns. If any one in England now says that the country is going to the dogs, he is likely to receive, from some bishop or other leading light, the retort that there are some very nice dogs; and yet some have not lost

the conviction that if you do no more than place the 'under dog' on top, you leave him a dog still. But English dogs are always improving in civilization; they are not only gregarious but social. At least they are better thought of in modern than they were in old England; but whether this is due to the rise of the dog family or to the fall of the human family is a problem on which Japan might not prove a safe or satisfactory authority.

Compared with the status and privilege of the English dog, the Japanese species occupies a much lower plane, being as yet afforded less facility for domestication. His master has not yet quite decided to treat him as a human being, or to make him a welcome member of the household. As a rule he cuts no figure in society; and the woman who would prefer a dog to a child would be ostracized. Nor has the dog yet acquired that social standing that entitles him to a ticket in an omnibus or railway coach, which gives him the right to take a seat beside ordinary passengers, as in England. The day is still distant when the Japanese dog can expect to be more highly, or lowly favoured than his human companions in regard to what he may, or may not, do in public, especially in regard to the laws of sanitation and the rules of decency. Possibly in no English home would any mere human being be permitted the liberties accorded to dogs, even could any be found so to condescend. Pre-

sumably there is a limit to the freedom of dogs, even in England, though its extent appears uncertain, particularly to foreigners. England is *par excellence* a dog's country. There he reaches the highest degree of civilization, freedom. It is quite safe to assume that no Japanese dog would be allowed the run of the house to the same degree that seems common in England. Certainly no Japanese lady would permit even her best dog to occupy her best bedroom, and recline under a silken eider-down in Witney blankets to convalesce from influenza, with a doctor in regular attendance; and much less would she be likely to pursue the enterprise of dog-breeding, for cash or any other reason. Where so many children are in poverty, and without means of a proper education, it would appeal to the Japanese as inhuman and inhumane to give dogs the preference in this respect. A mania for dogs is not yet regarded by these people as less evidence of mental deficiency than is any other mania.

In a London court of justice some time ago the learned judge elicited from a medical witness the opinion, in connexion with a mental case, that women sometimes show signs of mania by discarding their clothing; whereupon the bench suggested that perhaps the witness had better not discuss modern fashions. The point where sanity and sanitation begin and end in regard to dress and dogs, has already been decided by

public opinion in Japan. Before the Japanese reach that stage of civilization, where dogs are admitted to human equality, they will have to undergo a considerable readjustment in their ethical as well as their aesthetic ideals in regard to domestic relations. For some time yet the Japanese dog will have to be content to live separately from the Japanese family. Nor even on the most intimate terms between mistress and pet are kisses exchanged, a favour denied even to husband and child in Japan. Here again it is a question of sanitation, sanity and decency. No Japanese newspaper would ever have the opportunity of recording the death of a lady from a disease contracted by kissing her dog, as was the case lately in a metropolitan daily in England. A Japanese dog would be accorded the hospitality of the drawing-room only on condition that it be able to control its tastes and habits to a very exceptional degree ; nor would it be permitted to betray the slightest irritation, whatever the cause.

It may be that the Japanese dog is less well trained than the English dog, and is consequently more deficient in the manners of well-bred society ; he is apt to be rather liberal in his interpretation of the degree of familiarity acceptable to guests, and is likely unduly to take them into his confidence. The fact is that, in Japan, as in the rest of Asia, the dog is still an emblem of something low in the social scale, decidedly too low to

fraternize with men and women. For this reason many do not see why brutes should not be treated in a brutal way. A society for the prevention of cruelty to animals exists, and presumably includes dogs in its objective, for they are still regarded as animals in Japan ; but it is of foreign origin and mainly supported by foreigners, and consequently suspected of being a sentimental organization. Recently when a distinguished citizen of Japan was asked to contribute to the funds of this Society, by a European lady, he said to the native servant who presented the subscription list from his mistress : ‘ Fancy, the presumption of these Europeans ! After killing ten million men in the most cruel of all wars, they have the face to come out here and ask us to join them in spending money to keep people from killing dogs and cats ! ’ The inconsistency or the irrationality of the European mind is sometimes very impressive to the Asiatic mind.

The Occidental would regard the attitude of the average Japanese towards the dog as somewhat callous. A people who see nothing objectionable in dropping monkeys from aeroplanes, to test the physical effect of gravitation at various heights, would not be expected to waste much emotion on dogs. Most members of the canine family in Japan are of the mongrel variety, like the Indian’s dog, and spend their days infesting back-yards to inspect refuse boxes for provender, when not

digging up kitchen gardens, roadsides or fields in search of rodents, hunters and game alike a menace to the householder. It is true that some Japanese have begun to cultivate a fancy for dogs of more distinctive breed, even to the extent of importing finely descended animals from Europe. The dog cult is, however, regarded as eccentric by people generally. Too many Japanese dogs appear to be sadly ownerless, roaming about the streets and fields, living as best they can. No dog is permitted by the police to go about without a collar bearing the owner's name and address. To enforce this regulation a dog inspector is always prowling about in search of collarless dogs which he entices near enough to him to knock them on the head and be consigned to the 'dog cart' which a coolie is pulling behind him. Foreign residents of Japan hold this method of disposal to be decidedly cruel, but the authorities place the entire responsibility for it on the owner of the animal. Dog skins bring a certain price, nor is the flesh likely to be wasted. Dog fanciers have been sometimes surprised to find the glossy coat of a missing pet embracing the neck of a pedestrian met on the street.

It cannot be said that all Japanese are indifferent to dogs. The animal can always assure himself that he will not have lived in vain, for he eventually proves more useful to man than he does in Europe. He has the satisfaction of being bred

and born in a country where nothing edible is destroyed. To die from affection, or accident, and be interred with honours and deep mourning, is a far less glorious end for a decent dog than to continue his course in some human capacity as a vitamin to man. In England the average dog lives far better than the average citizen of Asia, but then he less often gives his life for his country. Some Japanese are more fond of dog than of dogs, just as we are with pigs. In a vernacular paper it was reported that a certain man had been prosecuted for eating his neighbour's dog. The prosecution proved that the law is slightly in favour of those not over-fond of dog. In court the judge conducted the examination of the accused with the usual candour:

Judge: 'Is it a fact that you ate your neighbour's dog?'

Accused: 'It is a fact that I ate a dog, but I do not know whose it was.'

Judge: 'Why did you eat the dog?'

Accused: 'Well, the dog came to my place, loitered about and looked hungry, so I fed him. He continued to come, and I continued to feed him. At last I began to feel that he owed me something. Then it occurred to me that, as I had to give a return feast to several friends who had banqueted me, for which I should have to buy some ducks or geese, why not have the dog? So we had him.'

Judge : 'Did your guests know the nature of the viands to which you were treating them ?'

Accused : 'That I do not know, for I never asked them, and they ventured no opinions, but they seemed to enjoy the feast, and thanked me in the usual polite manner.'

Judge : 'And did you not know that it was your neighbour's dog ?'

Accused : 'No, your honour, I had no idea whose dog it was.'

Judge : 'Did the animal have no collar ?'

Accused : 'No, your honour, none !'

Then, turning to the owner of the dog, who was prosecuting, the judge inquired whether his late dog had no collar, as the law required. The man replied that his late dog had a collar, but that it got broken, and while it was being mended, the dog ran away and did not return. Whereupon the judge threw up his two hands and delivered judgement :

Judge : 'The case is finished. The man who let his dog out without a collar will pay a yen for the offence ; and the man who ate the dog will pay a yen for eating him. Next case, please.'

An appetite for dog is not so distinctive a feature of the Japanese palate as it is of Filipino taste. In the Philippines dog is a favourite dish, and dog farms are as popular and profitable as poultry farms in England. Of course it is an expensive dish, like turkey or goose, and not everyone can

afford the luxury ; so its presence is confined largely to banquets and occasions where expenses are evenly divided. The dog is fattened and butchered like a sheep. Being properly dressed, it is stuffed with a mixture of rice and spices, cooked and served like sucking pig. It is said to make a tasty meal for those with a fancy for it. Nor would it prove less appetizing to more refined palates than rats and young mice, delicacies served in China, followed by an entrée of fat spiders and large green caterpillars as plump as young cucumbers. The Pacific coast Indians of America consider the most delicious of all morsels the large red ants found in decayed trees. This tit-bit is over an inch long, a deep claret colour, and, deftly popped into the mouth, breaks against the palate like a tokay grape, though the flavour is more like fresh lemon juice.

Occidentals may smile with supercilious independence because they can afford not to eat such things ; rather than eat dog they would prefer to let dog eat them, since the Alsatian craze ; but they should not complain of the less fortunately placed Oriental who develops a penchant for God's humbler creatures which are quite as respectable and nourishing as raw oysters and cheese mites, which otherwise would be of no use. In some part of the world, people will always be found to justify the Creator not only in making, but in regarding all things to be good. In Asia the gods are still

busy making all sorts of things, some of which are of rather questionable objective or utility ; but, while the Occident stands aghast and cultivates epicurism, the Orient goes ahead and utilizes even the least of earth's creatures. Why not take the gods at their word, and be grateful for the good things they provide ! It is more honest to take what is within one's reach than to gamble for what is not.

THE GUEST

THE *okyakusan*, or guest, is one of the most common subjects of conversation in Dai Nippon. Everyone who calls, independently of the visitor's aim or intention, is known as the 'honourable guest'; and even a thief, forcing entrance into a house at night, should, according to police advice, be so addressed by his involuntary host, and by all prudent householders be even so treated. It is, therefore, a most comprehensive term, involving an equally extensive knowledge of national etiquette and rules of social intercourse generally. A reputation for ignorance of, or indifference to, the mutual obligations and responsibilities of host and guest would mean a serious loss of social status to any self-respecting citizen. The passion for scrupulous correctness in this respect is universal.

In any locality whatever, as soon as a new neighbour has settled in, his first duty is to leave cards on those with whom he desires to be on calling terms. It is not for the inhabitants of the district he has decided to reside in to choose him, but for him to choose from among them. It is a convenience, truly, to be able thus to limit the number of calls one has to make and the number

of acquaintances one has to create. The number is left wholly to oneself; whereas, if the entire neighbourhood called on the stranger, he would be under obligation to return the calls, and thus acquire a number of merely temporary and artificial acquaintances. So the new-comer is left to choose his own friends, and he usually keeps them a reasonable time under observation before he selects those on whom he will call. The most obvious advantage of this procedure is that he has no guests or acquaintances thrust upon him, in fact none that he has not invited by leaving his card. Every call he makes will be politely returned.

It may surprise the Occidental to find that this etiquette has not only a social, but also an economic implication. For, when making a call, one has to bring a present, so as to leave behind some token of regard and goodwill. Giftless visits apparently are of no value. And though the neighbour is equally under obligation to bring a present when the call is returned, yet it does not always prove to be of equal value. But at all events the stranger has the advantage of being able to choose the number as well as the value of his presents, no less than the type of neighbour he desires to have reciprocate his advances. To what extent the stranger is led to choose his neighbours by their potential capacity for presents is neither for them nor for others to say. But the fact remains that the number of one's neighbours

must be strictly limited by the number and quality of the gifts one can personally afford to tender in making calls. Some of the more expert in social ethics do not hesitate to reduce economic stress by passing on some of the calling gifts that have been left upon them, especially if they prove to be undesirable possessions.

The nature and value of the gift must obviously vary according to circumstances and social status. People of abundant means are instinctively expected to provide more impressive presents than those less well off. A prince or princess may give a roll of exquisite silk ; and members of the imperial family are known to honour friends with priceless objects of fine art. Among ordinary folk, gifts appropriate for afternoon calls run all the way from a piece of soap, or a sponge cake to a silk handkerchief, a basket of oranges, or a dozen of eggs. Eggs one must accept with the same profuse gratitude as for a more durable token of regard, and then pass them on as speedily as possible in the same manner, with one's *carte de visite* ; for one never knows just how long eggs have been on duty, as they have a habit of impelling calls that otherwise would have been delayed or postponed, and so are kept on the move like a chain of prayer. It is probable that the more discriminating minds do not usually select eggs as calling gifts ; but once eggs are started they ought to be kept going until they stop of their own accord. Having had such

a present left on one's hands, the obvious duty is to shift the responsibility as soon as possible, for here, more than anywhere, discretion is the better part of valour.

On arriving at the house where a call is to be made, the guest does not knock, nor, as a rule, pull a bell. The door is made of paper, pasted on fine lattice work. If there is a bell it will be suspended from an arm or beam, and will be possibly a miniature of some famous temple bell, to be sounded by a small mallet hanging adjacent. The note of this bell will announce you in the softest and sweetest music. More often, however, your desire to enter will be proclaimed by simply clapping your hands, three times, softly and without sharpness or harshness, else you will be taken for a hawker and find no response. For a bona-fide guest the door soon slides gently open, framing a wealth of smiles, robed in radiant silk; the maid drops low on her knees, bows and welcomes the guest. Before entering you inquire: 'Is the honourable front of the house in?' If the reply is in the negative, and you desire then to see the lady of the house instead, you ask: 'Then is the honourable back of the house in?' If both the 'front' and the 'back' are out, there is no house left, and you must go out too. Should the person on whom you desire to call be at home, you are requested to 'deign to enter'; but before doing so you must remove your shoes. It is easy

for Japanese to slip out of their *geta* (clogs), or sandals, on the doorstep; but the Occidental guest has to descend to the floor and go through the humbling operation of unlacing footgear. A Japanese house is never entered with boots on, for the floor is made of mattresses, like a bed; and no one would think of walking on a bed with boots. Every Japanese floor, whether it be that of a cottage or a mansion, is composed of mattresses called *tatami*. Each is about six feet long and three feet wide, and some four inches in thickness, stuffed with straw and covered with beautiful, reed matting that looks like polished oak. The *tatami* are always exactly the same size, and fit the floor like brick or tiles; the room is built to fit the mats, not they to fit the room; and so one speaks of eight-mat rooms and ten-mat rooms and so on. On the floor there are no chairs, for chairs would spoil the floor as much as boots. In a Japanese house the guest does not sit, but kneels down and rests on the heels with toes out behind. A cushion, called *zabuton*, is given to rest the knees on, though the soft floor is quite comfortable without it. The Japanese can remain in this position for long periods without discomfort, whereas we can enjoy it no longer than a few minutes. The people of Nippon think that Europeans never sit down, because sitting on a chair is not sitting *down*, but *up*. Consequently if you happen to be on a wooden floor where chairs

are used, the Japanese do not say 'Please sit down,' but 'Please hang yourself up.'

On entering a reception room the guest takes the humblest place, at the door, until the host or hostess appears, when the guest is first warmly welcomed, yet in the most conventional tone, and then requested to go up higher. This is the duty of the guest at first to decline, as unworthy of such promotion; but, after repeated requests, and even admonitions, the guest, in a hesitating manner, appears to be induced at last to acquiesce, moving up a few inches after each beseechment, until finally the place of honour is reached in front of the *tokonoma*. A great many formal compliments have to be exchanged before getting down to whatever business or conversation the guest may have in mind. Though you have not seen your host or hostess since neither of you can remember, you yet must denounce your alleged stupidity and unkindness in having been so rude the last time you met; and the host must protest that your manners, if not angelic, were at least ideal, and that the rudeness was all on the other side, for which now due pardon is earnestly craved.

These bowings, prostrations, pleadings and apologies having been thus formally completed, you begin to feel relieved and more at home; and just as you are feeling the need of a cup of tea after so much exertion, it duly appears. While

a cup of Japanese tea proves less refreshing than a cup of Indian tea, it is yet better than nothing. In any case it is intended more as compliment in exchange for your present than as actual refreshment. When the guest is assured by the hostess that the tea is not fit for human consumption, and is appealed to, pathetically, to forgive the dishonour, there must be great care to reveal no sign of even the faintest acquiescence, however much the guest may feel it after tasting the tea. This profuse depreciation of their own things is customary among the Japanese, and they would, of course, be the first to protest if you agreed with them. Generally speaking the guest can quite sincerely disagree, except perhaps in the case of native tea, which no one could possibly call delicious. And yet the guest must so speak of it in order to be polite. Of course it is only a difference of taste due to a difference of education. Tea is served without milk and sugar, in tiny cups less capacious than those used in Europe for black coffee. Being without handles the cups have to be taken up in two hands, and then, after a graceful bow, the guest raises the cup level with the eyes, and again lowers it to the mouth, taking a long sip with sufficient audibility to convince the company that it is relished. The entire cup should be consumed in two sips and a half, the half coming last, and the space between sips unhurried. More than one of these impressive cups of tea may be

taken, though a guest is expected to exercise some restraint.

When the ceremony is over, the guest announces the desire to take leave of the host by declaring 'Honourable exit will perform.' Whereupon the maid will wrap up what, in the way of cake, is left over from the tea and hand it to the guest to take home, as a token of gratitude for the visit and for the gift which the visit implies. The same custom is observed towards all guests at a banquet. At even imperial banquets, guests help themselves to delicacies capable of pocket transportation, though often they prove to be mistaken as to what can successfully be so carried. Japanese guests make abnormally long calls, often lasting an hour or more, so there is no hurry in taking leave. The Occidental guest notices at once that a Japanese room has practically no furniture, except the tiny table, eight inches high and two feet square, which holds the tea things, and the little *hibachi* (firebox) to boil the kettle ; while the only wall decoration is a solitary *kakemono* or scroll, hanging in the *tokonoma*, before which a tall narrow table may bear a vase containing branches in bud or bloom. A *kakemono* may be the work of a famous artist ; it will at least represent some pretty natural scene, a landscape, perhaps, and usually historic, or something typical of animal, bird, or fish life. On the other hand, it may be an example of the calligraphy of some distinguished person, or even only that of

a friend. Once, on asking a companion to translate what seemed to me a beautiful example of native caligraphic art, the result was embarrassing :

Though life be as long as the entrails of a sheep,
Fame is as short as the horns of a snail.

Thus over all things Japanese, even over the guest at tea, there emerges a touch of melancholy, which, as the poem shows, is not always pointless or blind.

Of course, in Japan, a gentleman never calls upon a lady, nor a lady upon a gentleman, except in case of sheer necessity ; and when a gentleman calls on a Japanese, his host does not usually introduce him to the ladies of the household, unless there is a special reason, such as old acquaintance. The lady of the house, however, is expected to make her bow to the guest to offer welcome, and to apologize for the condition of the house and family. On one occasion when an English host formally apologized to his Japanese guests for his wife's failure to present herself in observance of the national etiquette, on the score of her having gone to lie down to rest, one of the guests, speaking for the others, said ' Oh never mind sir : I am sure your wife is very tiresome.' This confusion between ' tired ' and ' tiresome ' is common among students of our language in Japan.

On a certain occasion when dining with a dis-

tinguished Prince, I had the honour of being presented to the Princess, not, perhaps, so much a matter of courtesy as to give the lady an opportunity of meeting a foreigner for the first time. To my surprise the Prince asked me if I would care to hear some music, and then asked the Princess to play. She went to the piano and sang, to her own accompaniment, *Comin' thro' the Rye*. After the last note, to my horror, the Prince asked me to explain ' *Gin a body kiss a body, need a body cry*, etc.' Though mentally in almost a state of collapse, I managed to intimate to him that it was a mystery. It would have been quite impossible for me to have dilated on that aspect of Occidental civilization in language that a member of the kissless land nobility could have listened to without offence, especially in the presence of a lady.

After the guest announces that the 'honourable exit is about to be performed,' he makes the proper number of profound bows with accompanying compliments, feeling as the Queen of Sheba must have felt as she took leave of Solomon ; whereupon the guest must formally rise, proceed backwards towards the door, not forgetting to go down and put on the boots left at the door on entering.

The *okyakusan* at a hotel has to observe much the same manners, though, perhaps, less profuse in words. On his arrival a waitress is assigned to the guest, who takes him to the room where he is to eat and sleep. If the *menu* be beyond his

comprehension in the vernacular, as it is to most Occidentals, she will transliterate it sufficiently to enable him to guess the nature of the items numbered thereon, and then he can order by numbers. Should the return of the waitress be desired the guest claps the hands softly ; any other method of summoning her, such as calling would be considered extremely rude. Generally, if a tip is given, it is not for the waitress but for 'mine host' ; and it may be acknowledged by the offer of a toothpick in return. But all is done so graciously that it might well appear an exchange of gifts between princes.

At banquets the guests are seated in a semicircle on the floor around the small native tables, each one with a table to himself. The event usually begins about five o'clock in the afternoon, and may go on till nearly midnight. There are many courses and eating proceeds slowly, owing to the volume of conversation and the amount of entertainment. The guests are entertained in various ways : usually there are : *geisha* dancing, which is always interpretative of poetry or drama ; vocal and instrumental music ; sometimes imitation of animals and birds ; but seldom toasts or speeches, save a short expression of thanks from the host to the guests for their presence. But the host has to face the ordeal of prostrating himself before all the principal guests and drinking their health, and they must drink to his. By the time this

duty is completed at a large party, the host has had enough, in more senses than one, and is ready to see the last of his guests and go to bed. Saké, a native wine, is the popular drink at all feasts, though any guest may have tea or even beer. Should a guest, after having well drunken, feel more comfortable asleep than awake, there is no objection to his following his feelings. If he finds his neighbour a more convenient head-rest, or pillow, than the floor, that too must be as he wills. When a guest is thus caught by a neighbour, it is not considered the thing to give him the slip. However, the pillow may get even with the head by addressing too much conversation to it. A pillow that talks is unendurable. As the hour waxes late the guests, one by one, begin to depart, silently slipping away without disturbing others. When a guest desires to leave, he gives the signal to the *geisha* in charge of him, and she conducts him quietly out, hands him his wraps and calls his carriage, bowing low as she hands him into it, expressing the hope that he will honour the house by coming again. And so to bed, as Pepys said.

THE COOK

MASTERY of the culinary art is a new and increasingly important factor in the advancing civilization of Japan. New avocations naturally tend to produce new species in response to environment; and novelty of occupation often leads to novel if not unique results. Through overreaching ambition in the department of cuisine the *menu* may only too often fail to prove in sympathy with the *milieu*, the sequence being at least diverting.

In old Japan, save perhaps in princely or official establishments, cooks, in the modern sense, can hardly be said to have existed; the art of preparing food was common to the women folk of every household, and involved little more than practical experience in boiling the daily rice and broiling the portion of fish or fowl that accompanied it. There was also the mixing of condiments to relieve the stolid insipidity of the rice; which condiments, strange to say were, and still are, more powerful in smell than in taste and effect. But even in so primitive a stage of the culinary art some women were, of course, more gifted than others, as is still the case. The aversion from a flesh diet, fostered by Buddhism, simplified the

preparation of food to a great extent, without any corresponding advantage in nutrition.

Now all this is rapidly changing, and the new Japan, in proportion as economic circumstances permit, is cultivating a palate for all the viands of the Occident, and the manner of cooking them, with a zest that even professional cooks are not always able to overtake. Most of the population of Japan is yet too impecunious to afford the number of courses consumed by the average foreigner, even when foreign food is called for, which is not often ; the average citizen of the country has to live from hand to mouth, eating rice three times a day the year round, and thankful if he can always have enough of that ill-sustaining food. Such inadequate sustenance leaves the greater part of the nation physically under normal and consequently exposed to the ravages of disease. But more and more attention is being devoted to improvement in the quantity and the quality of the nation's food, to which there is a distinct popular response in proportion to the cost of living.

And new tastes in food create new manners and customs, for if a Japanese calls for European food he likes to have it served as well as cooked in the European manner ; he desires to sit at a table and eat with knife, fork and spoon, instead of down on the floor at a tiny table, eating with chopsticks. In most of the modern restaurants in the larger

centres of population, food is cooked and served in the Occidental manner, and, if called for, in the native manner as well. In all the more pretentious hotels, as well as in some private mansions, a French chef, or one of his pupils, will be found on duty. From the larger inns, where a chef is employed, native cooks graduate in a phenomenally short time, and set out with a free hand to practice on the lesser hostleries, and also on defenceless foreign residents and households, though most Occidental housewives in the Far East prefer to train their own cooks, as the home-trained article usually proves more easy of domestication and less expensive in his menus.

In an Occidental household in Japan it is the cook's fate to be summoned by the mistress of the establishment, every morning after breakfast to be informed of the materials on which he will be expected to exercise his art during the next twenty-four hours ; all of which he carefully notes down in a book, and then goes out to make the specified purchases. On all things bought by him for the household he expects what is sympathetically termed a 'squeeze' which means that if he obtains a bunch of carrots for three pence he may put a half penny more in the bill. The 'squeeze' is not formally noticed on either side ; but if it becomes suspiciously large the mistress may remark casually on the expensiveness of certain items and threaten to do without them

until the price comes down. It is not always easy for the busy housewife to identify all the items in the cook's *kanjo* (bill) presented for payment at the week's end. She notices, for example, and is not a little puzzled by an entry of two pence for 'smell,' an ingredient as free as the atmosphere itself in the Orient. On demanding an explanation the cook does not try to argue or even to explain, but simply retires to the pantry and soon returns with a small bottle of almond essence or vanilla, which he holds before the lady's eyes as he sniffs with triumph. It is a laudable instinct that all food should have some smell, but in the East it is not always easy to agree with native cooks as to what it should be. There is an infinite variety, bad, good and indifferent; only too often the cook decides for himself what the flavour or odour shall be, which is not altogether satisfactory. Japanese cooks can impart very remarkable, and even lively flavours, to food, happily more often inviting than the reverse.

An unusual volume of explanation and instruction is necessary if misunderstandings between the cook and the mistress of the house are to be avoided. A foreign lady some time ago gave her cook an order to have oysters for supper; and when the family was summoned by the universal gong, all to be seen was a large platter heaped with persimmon. Obviously the mistress of that house lacked facility in pronouncing the

vernacular, for the only difference between the shell-fish and the fruit was a slight accent on a syllable of one of two words spelled exactly the same, as *kake* and *kaké*. In another household the cook was asked to make a birthday cake in honour of one of the younger members of the family. The birthday party assembled and the cake duly appeared. It turned out to be a double-storied erection frosted with sugar, the middle of the cake surmounted by a gilded crown on either side of which was planted a tiny Union Jack, while on the remaining white space were the two large letters, G. R. in red. Everybody gazed in amazement at the achievement. But why this kindly compliment to a member of a private family? Nor was the King's birthday approaching; rather had it but recently passed. Inquiry revealed the fact that in his former place of service, the mistress had the cook make a cake like this once a year, presumably for the King's birthday; it was the cook's most notable production in cakes; and when he was asked to do his best for the present birthday he naturally made the best birthday cake. He fancied that all the best birthday cakes were made just alike.

It is practising his art on his fellow countrymen, that enables the Japanese cook to enjoy full liberty of experiment, for he feels that he always knows more about foreign food and its preparation, than they do. When foreign cake was first intro-

duced into Japan the numerous varieties thereof made it sometimes rather difficult to identify. Sponge cake the Japanese have known since the advent of the Portuguese and Spanish in the sixteenth century ; it is called ' casterra,' a corruption of the word Castile, from which city it was supposed to have been derived. Modern cookery has brought in other brands of cake. A Japanese gentleman told the author that in the early days of his country's intercourse with England, a friend of his opened a shop which sold English goods. On looking over the shop one day he asked his friend what the yellow things in a small wooden box were. The reply was that they were cakes from England. He priced them and then took one home to try. On reaching his house he found his wife seated at tea with two guests, an old lady and gentleman, neighbours of the family. He greeted them and then remarked that they were fortunately present to share with him and his wife an English cake which he had just bought in a foreign goods store. He took out the cake, cut it in pieces with a knife and passed it to the guests. Each took a bite off the piece selected, as all had failed to break any off ; and then they gazed at one another in stupid bewilderment, keeping their mouths perfectly motionless. At last the host took his bite of cake from his mouth, apologizing for such rude behaviour, but suggesting that, in the circumstances, it was permissible for all to do the

same. The others promptly acted on the suggestion, and the host had the ejected portions of cake taken away by the maid. After some uncomplimentary remarks on English taste in food, they turned to more pleasant conversation. The next day the host went back to the shop with the remainder of the cake, and, pointing out the box of cakes, said to the shopman ; ‘ Do you mean to say that the English eat the like of that ? ’ ‘ Eat it ? ’ exclaimed the merchant. ‘ Why no : they only use it to wash their faces with. ’ ‘ Then why call it cake ? ’ ‘ That, I do not know ; but the agent who sold it to me told me that the proper name of the soap was cake. ’ Nor do the Japanese yet quite understand why we should speak of a small piece of soap as a cake of soap, though modern usage is introducing the term ‘ tablet ’ for it.

This gentleman intimated that he had a somewhat similar experience when he visited London for the first time, and was invited out to dine. His first surprise was that all the waiters at the dinner were dressed just like himself, so that in appearance there was no distinction between servants, host and guests. One of the waiters handed around a silver tray heaped up with little yellow balls, with a tiny spear to secure them. Each guest took up the weapon and speared a ball and laid it on a plate near him. The Japanese guest had no difficulty in doing this, for he was an expert

spearman. But he was consumed with curiosity as to the nature and use of the little yellow ball he had captured. He kept a careful eye on the other guests, but they did not appear to have any use for it. Unable to wait longer, he took the ball on the point of his fork and put it into his mouth. He almost collapsed when he discovered that it was some sort of grease and was rapidly turning into oil in his mouth. Almost overcome by the appalling thought that if he swallowed the contents of his mouth he would become suddenly ill, and if he should put it out on his plate he would disgrace himself and his country, while if he used his handkerchief he could not return it to his pocket, he decided to take the risk of swallowing it, so, giving his head a jerk, down it went ; and then he was surprised and comforted to find that nothing happened. He was none the worse for the episode. But he could never forget his first taste of butter.

Foreign residents of Japan, for the most part, eat the same food to which they were accustomed at home, since all such is now produced in or imported into Japan. As the duty is very high the cost of living to foreigners is enormous. Many Occidentals have a Japanese meal a few times a week, in which case the cook's wife will often prove the better cook, as the professional cook despises the task of preparing native food, which he regards as woman's work. For a native *menu* there is nothing more delectable to the foreign palate

than *gyunabé*, which is thin bits of sirloin fried over a charcoal fire, done to taste by oneself ; or *torinabé*, small pieces of chicken braized in a pan with *shoyu*, a native sauce ; either may be eaten with rice or vegetables. Another nice dish is *shiwoyaki* which is fish-steak or cutlet, preferably the seabream, broiled with salt and *shoyu*. Broiled eels on rice, known as *unagimeshi*, is also a delicious meal. There is a great variety on the menu of a good native restaurant, for those who can afford to select freely. The vast majority of native customers have to be content with the usual rice accompanied by a bit of fish and some pickles. The latter should always include *daikon*, a loud smelling condiment that obviates the insipidity of the rice, and its inertia as well. This *daikon* is the result of putting giant horse-radish through a lengthy process of fermentation until it acquires the impressive aroma of decaying vegetables, appealing with equal force to both olfactory and digestive organs. At first the effect of this relish on the foreigner, even in the distance, is to convince him of the existence of something that he could never possibly allow to approach his mouth, much less enter it. But in time the average foreigner becomes as docile in its presence as a Japanese is, as an alternative to abstinence from native food or having to leave the country. But to certain brands or qualities of European cheese the Japanese have an equal aversion. They think

live fish preferable to live cheese ; and similarly the Chinese prefer green caterpillars to cheese mites.

A long residence in the Far East convinces one that Japanese is to be preferred to Chinese food. At the most sumptuous Chinese banquet the author ever attended, given by a person of high class, pig in some form attempted to grace too many of the courses. At last the whole pig came on the table, sizzled to a nice tasty brown ; it was stuffed like roast goose ; it had a flavour much superior to the parts of its relatives in the other dishes. A course consisting of the tips of the last joints of turkeys' wings required more nibbling and sucking than was either profitable or pleasant. During the repast all the guests sat around an oval table. Each course was laid in the centre of the table, whence the guests helped themselves with their chopsticks as best they could. The Japanese also use chopsticks, but are obviously not so expert in wielding them as the Chinese. A Chinese can hold a bowl of green peas in front of him, and, with chopsticks shoot the peas into his mouth one by one without a miss. At this feast all the guests dug into the central dish at each course and secured whatever their chopsticks could seize ; and the liquid portion of any course they obtained with porcelain ladles placed beside their plates, passing these ladles from the central dish direct to their mouths without wasting time in putting the liquid on

their plates. Once when I failed to capture enough substance to reward my efforts, my neighbour, expressing great sympathy for me, picked out all the favourite morsels he could find, with his own chopsticks, and put them on my plate. Even then, I am afraid, I did not finish that course. One course was in a beautiful silver dish ; and when the waiter removed the cover there was a fine duck sitting as if afloat on a lake ; the bird looked quite like life, with its glossy green feathers, and his head laid on his breast as if asleep. The host bowed to the guests, took his chopsticks and seized the duck by the neck, lifted off the skin, let it drip a moment, and then handed it to the waiter who solemnly took it by the beak and carried it out without a smile. Under the skin was minced duck, which was rather nice ; it had the consistency and taste of good sausage, though the flavour had been selected from a list with which a foreigner could not be familiar.

On relating this experience to a friend, who had spent twenty-six years in China, he said it was nothing to episodes he had enjoyed at feasts in that country. On one occasion when the host took off the lid of the central dish the whole dish ran away. It was full of tiny, baby crabs, about the size of honey bees ; and as soon as the crabs saw light and freedom, they started to run all over the table at top speed. The guests were in no way disturbed, but simply took up their chop-

sticks and began picking up the delicious morsels which they put into their mouths as fast as they could, lest any should escape off the table. I asked my friend if he did the same, but he denied this, saying he had only seized his chopsticks and stood on the defensive. It is a great convenience to have on the *menu* ingredients that require no more attention than to be washed and confined. The Japanese consider one of their most dainty morsels to be *sashimi*, which is small steaks of raw fish still quivering from the knife. These are dipped in *shoyu* and dropped into the mouth as Europeans do with raw oysters. But gastronomic possibilities in Japan pale before those in the celestial republic.

The Japanese cook is perhaps, on the whole, more sanitary and less likely to take risks. Whether in Japan or China the average foreign housewife will admit that she keeps a clearer conscience and a steadier nerve by visiting her kitchen as seldom as possible. An English lady long resident in China said that when she was giving a dinner one night, the cook delayed abnormally in sending in the coffee. Her husband suggested that probably the cook understood that it was to follow them into the drawing-room. But no; the lady had given the cook clearly to understand that she wanted the coffee sent into the dining-room before the guests withdrew. Unable to wait longer, the lady excused herself and went to the kitchen to learn the cause of the delay. There she saw the cook

standing by the stove straining the coffee through one of her husband's socks. Rushing at him, she demanded what he meant. 'All light, Missie, all light, all light : dutty one, dutty one, all-same go laud'y.' He could discern no reason for the excitement of the lady, seeing that he had been thoughtful enough not to soil a clean sock, but had taken one on its way to the laundry, so that the cost of his device was nil. The Oriental cook is apt to conclude, after long experience with Occidentals, that economic principles will be acceptable in all circumstances. An economical cook is, of course, the greatest of treasures, but there are limits, even to economy.

THE CONDUCTOR

IN Japan the conductor of a train, tram or omnibus is usually found to be a man of remarkable stature and personality, partially inherited but mostly acquired from experience in management of the travelling public. How physique no less than character should be thus affected will appear as we proceed. With a faculty as versatile and affable as that of an orchestral conductor, he has to command the allegiance of instruments as various, and yet maintain a harmony acceptable to all. For trams, the conductor has not only to be a person of distinguished self-control, and able to control others, but he must be also a person of small stature and wiry make-up, because the vehicles over whose passengers he presides are so densely crowded that a conductor of expansive proportions could never manage to worm his way between the passengers to collect fares. Not only has he to bend low and slide between the ladies, gentlemen and children that fill all space, without unduly discommoding them, but he may also have to slither over their shoulders, if the crush be so severe as thus to elevate him. In case he is caught in a jam the weight of the conductor must not

be too great to prevent his being pushed upward for relief, nor his stature so large as to entail being trampled upon should the power of gravitation overcome that of the human uplift. Whichever way he is driven, up or down, back or forth, or merely held midway as in a vice, he must keep perfectly cool and unperturbed, duly grateful that he is permitted to survive.

In most countries a public servant so subject to the chance and drift of circumstance would be likely to lose self-respect as well as the respect of others, but in Japan it is quite the other way. Everybody knows that to fill some jobs one must persist if one is to exist. Some one has to do this work ; and the conductor considers himself fortunate in having been endowed by the gods with the exact weight appropriate to his task, and a spirit equal to the weight. His wages may not be above £2 or £3 a month ; but there is no scarcity of candidates for the post, though the right men are hard to find and not easy to train. A tram car jammed full to the platforms is easier to manage than one but partially full ; for in a full car passengers simply have to go where force drives them, but with freer space they at once begin to exercise their wills and decide for themselves the space, or spaces they desire to occupy ; and if wills conflict, the conductor is responsible for adjusting the differences. People with expansive skirts will

often occupy more than their rightful space; and if some one comes in and sits on his neighbour's *kimono* tail, there may be objections, even though the objector should have had care enough to gather his skirts under him. Often a dense mind is not aware that a hefty neighbour is solidly placed on the skirt of his *kimono*, which is rather unfortunate for the skirt when its owner suddenly jumps up at a tram stop and discovers too late that he has left a part of his fine silk under his neighbour. The results are not pleasant either for the conductor or the two protagonists. In some cases a thoughtful passenger will hesitate to seat himself on the skirts of a thoughtless neighbour, and request the conductor to have the offender collect his skirts and make room, a duty not always pleasant but always politely heeded by the conductor. If a passenger with a big waterproof cape enters the tram on a wet day there is apt to be an unpleasant drip on his neighbours, and there may arise in that section of the car a commotion which only the conductor can allay. Nor is a dripping passenger any more welcome if he finds space beside some lady in fine silken robes.

The difficulties and responsibilities of the little tram conductor are indeed endless, yet usually obviated to a marvellous degree. The tram comes to a standstill by an application of the brakes that brings it up with an abruptness which causes

all the passengers to become unpleasantly familiar. The car, already full, nevertheless has still further additions forced into it. The conductor pulls the bell, sets grimly his countenance, puts one hand on his cash bag and the other in front of him, makes a steady dive in among the massed passengers. Disappearing thus for a moment, he emerges somewhere midway on the surface like a teal duck and shouts 'Any uncut folk? Uncut folk?' This is a polite inquiry whether it is possible that any one on the tram has not yet had his ticket clipped. Passengers are supposed to provide themselves with tickets before entering the car; they can purchase a book of tickets from the conductor if they wish; but all who have tickets must have them clipped when the conductor makes his round, and those without tickets must secure them. Sometimes when the conductor, after performing his acrobatic evolutions for several hours is so exhausted that he seems slow in reaching the 'uncut folk,' some old woman will cry out that she is still 'uncut,' and the conductor has to drag what is left of him in her direction and give the tiny bit of paper the magic nip. As all tickets have to be given up to the conductor before leaving the tram, such care to clip them might seem unnecessary; but an uncancelled ticket could be used again if a passenger managed to push off in a crowd without delivering it up. There is no throwing

the tickets about the street as in some other countries. Perhaps on reaching the old woman who is so anxious to have her ticket clipped, the conductor finds that she requires other attention, more than she bargained for, because she has calmly appropriated three seats by placing a child on one side of her and a basket on the other, while some of those who are weary strap-hanging look daggers at both the woman and the conductor. The woman looks greatly surprised at being thought an offender, finally succumbs to advice and places the child on her back and the basket on her knees. The conductor makes his molestation of her as gracious as possible by reminding her gently, to the amusement of those less concerned, that it is really easier to put the baby on her back and the basket on her knees than to accommodate two passengers there. Yet it may be that the woman will be slow to take even so broad a hint, and simply remark that, though she is sorry to have inconvenienced any one, it is hardly worth while readjusting her impedimenta as she is getting off at the next stop.

At each stop more passengers always appear to be getting in than are getting out, and how the car accommodates them is a mystery. If there is the slightest space between two shoulders, some narrow-hipped passenger will turn his back, slip between and sink down like a wedge to the seat, or as near to it as his weight will bring him,

driving all the others along the seat until they are packed together like books on a shelf. All those standing, or attempting to stand, in the aisle are crushed together in the same way, until some are actually sitting on the knees of those seated. At last the crush is so great, no one can get either in or out when the car stops. Some feeble and unfortunate victim, vainly attempting extrication from the mass of jammed humanity in the door, cries out for relief. The motor man looks around, peers over the heads through the small space at the top of the door, surveys the situation until satisfied there is a crisis, then mercifully turns on full power; the car gives a ferocious lurch forward, and the passengers jammed in the door are shot in or out according to the end of the tram they happen to be trapped in. All the passengers are thus thrown into indecorous collision, and some have their bare feet trampled and even cut by the sharp wood of the *geta* on the feet of others. The lower part of these *geta* is called the 'teeth'; and complaints of the effect of the 'ha' or 'teeth' of the *geta*, shouted through the car sound as if someone had said, 'you have bitten my foot!' And when one accuses another of having put his 'ha' into his foot, the ensuing argument or altercation is endless.

At the next stop some aged person announces that, owing to the press around her, she can neither rise up nor get out; the conductor calls

upon all the passengers to loosen up ; but the old woman is of such proportions that no space can be made for her exit until the passengers between her and the door move out in file before her, and then regain the car after she alights. A child similarly situated is simply lifted to the shoulders of the crowd and passed along to the door and dropped tenderly to the street, while several passengers meanwhile dodge under the arms of those on the platform and try to force their way into the car. As the vehicle is now packed beyond all possibility of further additions, the conductor has to engage in a hand to hand struggle to keep off the crowd until the car can start and leave them behind.

Some of those seated in the tram will have heavy bundles on their backs, their heads bent forward, protruding against the middles of those obliged to stand. The latter often consider it undignified if not uncomfortable to be butted into in this manner, and may turn a hard hip against the offending head. It is also undesirable to have one's fine silks soiled by being rubbed against greasy hair. Passengers standing, with bundles on their backs, lean against their neighbours for support or to make space to balance themselves, as well as to counteract the motion of the car, conduct which never seems to be appreciated. As the car whirls along, and the internal mass sways about, two tired business men lean back to back in the aisle, supporting each

other in an effort to keep their eyes on a newspaper. If a seated passenger produces a paper from the folds of his *kimono*, all his neighbours in sight of the paper immediately display a vivid desire to share in the news. No one minds if a neighbour takes the liberty of looking at his paper with him ; nor does a passenger mind others examining the contents of his purse while fare is being extracted. If a passenger, desiring to ease one leg by putting his entire weight on the other, seeks your support in his dilemma, you are expected to show neighbourly acquiescence, for he would be more than surprised, if not annoyed, were he abruptly to be let down. There must, of course, be some limit to the rule of give and take in the trams, but the foreign passenger finds that only too often the give is greater than the take. Even ladies are most courteous in submitting to the often gross indignities of tram traffic. In rush hours the Tokyo trams have special cars for women and children to avoid casualties among the defenceless. On ordinary trams braw youths remain seated with folded arms in complete indifference to the plight of mothers with babies on their backs, swinging on the straps while waiting or hoping for seats. A foreigner, as a rule, will offer his seat in such circumstances, but if a lady appears to be accompanied by a gentleman, the foreigner will hesitate to relinquish his seat in her favour, for the lady

would most probably offer it to her male companion, to the disgust of the courteous foreigner.

If a European is somewhere packed away in a tram full of people every passenger realizes the presence of the alien, and each new passenger at once detects it. A mother coming on board the tram with an infant on her back, notices that the child soon discovers the foreigner and keeps its eyes riveted on him. No matter how pleased the child may seem, even exchanging smiles with the foreigner, the mother will avert the child's gaze as soon as she notices it, for it lowers her status in the eyes of all the other passengers to admit that a Japanese baby could enjoy the countenance of a foreigner, and shame its family. There may also be a fear of the evil eye. In a Japanese tram one must be ever ready for surprises. If one's neighbour suddenly starts loudly whistling a tune, the other passengers are no more than entertained, especially if it is good whistling; another may deftly remove, polish and replace his artificial teeth, with the same entertaining effect. Human ears will be seen used often for other than auditory purposes; to carry small coins, tram tickets or cigarettes. At the end of a route the conductor demands all tickets, and instantly hands and ears are emptied and the contents delivered up. For want of proper ventilation the trams are only too often reduced to germ-boxes, especially in

winter when to open a window is to threaten one's fellow passengers with their death of cold.

As the tram recedes from the centre of the city the crush of passengers eases somewhat. The foreigner pulls himself together and straightens up to assure himself that he is neither poisoned nor disabled. Thanks to his strong boots his feet may be bruised but not scratched or cut. His once clean boots are, however, now streaked with mud from innumerable *geta*, in which disfigurement his trouser legs are also apt to share. A woman dressed like a lady enters the tram in the suburbs. While having her ticket clipped she sniffs audibly and looks about the tram in disgust. The conductor sniffs out of sympathy, and politely inquires whether she smells something. The reply is that she does: she smells fish. It is against the rules to carry fish on the trams, for the odour of fish in any stage of existence does not mix fragrantly with the atmosphere of trams, whether by overreaching the limit or failing to reach it is not known. The objection to providing conveyance for fish is based not only on smell, but also on the fact that so many passengers used to forget their fish in the hurry to get out when the car stopped; and other passengers, rushing for seats, did not realize that they were seated on half a dozen uncleaned fresh herrings until it began to dawn upon them slowly that there was a peculiar and

increasing dampness beneath them, but then it was too late to save a fine silk *kimono* from being stained or even spoiled. Now fish is taboo on trams. So the lady sniffed. Then she arose and looked under her ; she did not desire to see herself nor anyone else in the unfortunate predicament of having a passenger rush back into the tram and ask politely, ' May I ask if you are sitting on my fish which I left here ? ' Most people, unless dreadfully poor, would rather abandon crushed fish and leave the conductor to face the music and the mess when the unlucky one discovered the nature of his cushion. The conductor now announces that he is informed that someone in the tram is in possession of fish ; he goes on to affirm that fish are prohibited in trams and must at once be removed. All the passengers regard one another with anxiety. Deep silence reigns, save for the murmur of the tram. The conductor regards the lady who complained. She regards the person she suspects. She and the conductor sniff again in sympathy. The conductor declares that he does not see any one with fish on the tram. The lady admits the invisibility, but the odour of fish and consequently its presence she continues to affirm. The conductor looks up and down the tram and repeatedly asks whether any one has fish, but receives no reply. He walks up and down glancing at the various parcels in possession of certain persons.

The owners fail to return his notice. He approaches a man most likely to be the culprit, for he has a basket. Pausing before the man, the conductor surveys the basket a moment. The man is old and his scanty clothes are in dire need of repair. He keeps his eye on the floor and appears quite unconscious of the official scrutiny. At last the conductor asks boldly whether the contents of the basket are responsible for the tone of atmosphere prevailing in the tram. The man is unresponsive, even uncommunicative. 'May I venture to ask, sir, whether you happen to have fish in that basket?' 'No,' says the man brusquely, gazing still at the floor and looking insulted. 'But the aroma of piscatorial essence is in the air, and there must be a reason for it. I must ask you to oblige me by allowing me one honourable glance at the contents of your basket. Sorry, sir, but duty compels.' The man removes the lid of the basket, revealing two lobsters, obviously not fresh.

'Ah,' says the conductor, 'I was right; you have fish after all.'

The lady who called official attention to the smell now looks pleased and relieved, and all the passengers smile. The old man is unconvinced and declares with emphasis that he has no fish. 'No fish?' cries the conductor. 'If those things in your basket are not fish, what are they, I should like to know?'

‘They are insects!’ solemnly declares the old man, and refuses to be moved either from his convictions or his seat. The conductor for a moment looks baffled. The passengers regard both the conductor and the man with amused impatience, for the argument continues and the conductor appears uncertain whether the lobsters are insects or not. In Japan certain insects are crustaceans, at least they seem so when one vainly tries to indent their armour. The trams, of course, have no regulations against the carriage of insects, a matter in which there is even undue freedom. To prohibit insects would only deplete traffic and ruin the company. And so the old man finally relieved the tension of the situation by reaching the place where he intended to leave the tram.

The temptation for shopboys to use the trams for the delivery of parcels is so great that regulations, as to the size of such parcels, have to be rigidly enforced, much to the inconvenience of those weary of delivering goods. One day a man suddenly clambered on to the platform of a tram, with a bundle on his back something the shape of a sausage, but so long that, while it was about a foot in diameter, the length extended far above his head and almost down to his heels. The conductor protested and tried to eject him, but he refused to be moved. The argument waxed hot and prolonged, and the tram was delayed, to the disgust of many impatient

passengers. The conductor was about to seize the offender and forcibly throw him out, when he noticed that the parcel was suddenly reduced to the regulation size, as if by magic. It appeared that the parcel was a huge air cushion made on purpose to discomfit the tram conductor by one whom he had once ejected for carrying parcels over the regulation size; and during the present argument with the conductor the man had been allowing the air gradually to escape, until, before it was realized, the parcel had assumed a size to which no objection could be taken. By this trick the errand boy was enabled to enjoy the cheap glory of having defied and defeated a tram conductor.

In another corner of the tram is seated a man of middle age; his face is puffed unnaturally and his hands bandaged. He is a leper, and has lost the tips of his fingers. The tips of his ears are also going. The conductor approaches and asks whether he has a ticket. The man apparently has no ticket; but he could not hand it out even if he had. The conductor would not be anxious to pluck a ticket from a leper's ear. The man looks helplessly into the conductor's face, as he is told that he cannot ride without a ticket. For a moment there is silence between them. The conductor is about to stop the car. An old woman across the aisle, touches the conductor's elbow and hands him a ticket, asking that the

old man be not put off. The incident is thus pleasantly closed, and all look relieved.

At the next stop a pretty Englishwoman enters the tram. She looks about for a moment, and, seeing no vacant seat, she hangs on the strap, swaying with the motion of the car. Neither man nor boy offers her a seat. Of such indifference she appears quite unconscious. She glances towards the corner of the tram where a man seems to be in distress just across from the leper. His hand has fallen away from a sling that has opened from his neck. Blood oozes from his bandaged arm, and the man looks faint. The blood drips on the floor. He has probably had a bad accident in a factory or somewhere. All regard him with dismay as he attempts in vain to refasten the sling. No one offers to assist him. The Englishwoman abandons her tram strap and goes to him, rebinds his bleeding arm, tying a handkerchief above the artery to stop the flow of blood, restores the arm to the sling and refastens the sling behind his neck. At this operation the rest of the passengers gaze in helpless amazement. This woman was once doubtless a sweet Girl Guide in some English parish or school. She is a woman that these tram passengers will never forget. Several passengers now offer their seats, including even the leper, but she only thanks them and simply regains her tram strap, as if nothing had happened.

THE ACTOR

THE actor's avocation, in Japan no less than in Europe, is one of the oldest forms of public instruction and entertainment. Nor has histrionic art a different origin on either side of the world. As in Greece, so in Japan, the theatre began with a religious motive: it was inspired by a desire to excite in the gods a favourable interest in human affairs; and it was only a very natural conclusion that what was good enough to elicit the interest of divine beings ought at least be good enough to entertain their human offspring. The earliest forms of dramatic performance were songs and dances at temple festivals. The oldest national tradition has it that when the Sun Goddess hid herself in anger, leaving the world bereft of light, the only device that could induce her to return and lighten the darkness was a beautiful dance; which may suggest that dancing was prior to song. At any rate the native religion has provided dances for the gods ever since. Herein lies the origin of poetry, for these early religious dances were operative and interpretative of sacred song or emotion. Even now all Japanese dances are interpretations of poetry.

But even gods are apparently not all alike, and some of them eventually wearied of a performance wholly serious or merely didactic. Consequently in time drama became divided into sacred and secular performances: drama that appealed to gods, and drama that appealed to man. The sacred drama retained its lyrical form, and is known as the *hogeï*, commonly called the *No*, and is always a serious artistic effort; while the more secular drama came to be known as the *kabuki*, which means a performance that is amusing. The *No* stands for serious achievement, for real art, for work; the *kabuki* stands for what is more trifling, for jest, for play. The *No* remains what it was, for the most part; but the *kabuki* has divided again into, not quite tragedy and comedy, for there is no such distinctive difference in Japanese drama, but into *jidaimono*, or historical plays, tinged mostly with a tragic element; and the *sewamono*, or domestic social drama, in which comedy is dominant.

Thus the evolution of drama in Japan has followed much the same trend as in England where miracle and mystery plays proved inadequate to meet the increasing demand for farcical motives and situations; and consequently we find Heywood and others introducing interludes with a comic element, thus departing from the purely religious or moral drama. In Japan, before the *kabuki* developed from the *hogeï*, the need was also felt

for some relief from the solemnity of the main piece, and consequently we note the appearance of the *kyogen* interludes, or skits, for the delectation of the groundlings. The *No* drama held sway until the sixteenth century, after which the evolution of new forms was rapid, and soon became quite pronounced, resulting in the popular *kabuki* with its *jidaimono* and *sewamono* plays.

In the earliest Japanese theatres the audience sat on mats under the open sky, or stood without cover, as in the theatre of Tudor England, except for those that could afford a chair. In Japan the patrons of the popular drama were regarded for the most part as among the more vulgar of the population. The higher class remained devoted to the *No*, as they still are. The morals of the *kabuki* eventually became so pernicious that, although women were its inventors and promoters, they were now prohibited from acting on the *kabuki* stage, and from the year 1629 onward all such actors had to be men.

Simultaneously with the development of the lighter drama, though older in origin, there came into use the famous puppet shows which had so decided an influence on drama generally, as may still be seen in the national theatre where the action, and the masked characters, always suggest the movement of marionettes. Gidayu later brought in an orchestra to interpret or emphasize action, after the manner of the chorus in Greek

drama. Typical plays had certain stock characters like those in our miracle and morality plays, though the Japanese playwright has never been given to allegory and the impersonation of moral principles to the same extent as in our mediæval plays. There was always a hero, supposedly good, who held the centre of attention, and against whom were the *katakiyaku*, or villains, representing enemies, comprising such grades of evil as 'very villainous,' 'ordinarily villainous,' 'comically villainous,' while others were 'amorously bad' and 'aristocratically wicked,' together with some definitely comic characters. Feminine characters were classified again as servants, fashionable females, samurai women, ladies of aristocratic rank, and so on.

Even after drama came to be performed in buildings erected for the purpose the audience continued to sit on mats on the floor, as is still done in the majority of Japanese theatres. The *hanamichi*, or flowery walk, ran down the centre, along which a popular actor could advance in the interpretation of his part, or to acknowledge the plaudits of his admirers. The more popular actors often had silk garments thrown at them on the stage, a more useful form of praise than bouquets; while unpopular members of the caste were noticed by having mats hurled at them, hence the phrase '*hanjo*' him, still in use. The *hanjo* was a small mat on which the auditor sat

during the play ; the word means half a mat, the size used for theatres. Much more than Occidentals the Japanese are disposed to express disapproval, no less than approval, during plays or public addresses ; and to-day in the Imperial Parliament bores are still ' hanjoed.'

The form of the stage on which the plays were acted passed through a series of evolutions, until it was made to revolve, as in many modern theatres, so as to avoid delay in the preparation and presentation of scenes. Failing to train horses to act otherwise than as bulls on the stage, the Japanese theatre finally had to use men to make up an equine appearance, in which a military hero came riding into view, a most difficult ordeal both for the rider and the ridden. If the two men who were employed to act as legs, upholding the body of the horse and its rider, were obliged to remain stationary for any length of time, a stick was seen mysteriously extending between the animal's abdomen and the floor to relieve the weight ; and if the horse refused to move when the rider applied his spurs, the animal could always be induced to act by dropping a piece of yellow sugar (a coin) into his mouth, for that was the beast's main support. When the dramatic horse was not in use, his legs left the body, retransformed into two men who did odd jobs about the stage and green-room, for which they were entitled to further tips. Though these men did not,

like the young Shakespeare, hold horses, they made horses, yet never developed into real actors or playwrights by copying or improving parts for actors and by arranging scenes. Whether they had to remain menial for lack of opportunity or of ability does not appear.

In the performance of Japanese drama costume has always been a vitally important factor, because, unlike Occidental drama, the Japanese is more concerned with something to see than with something to hear, though Occidental drama is now inclined in this direction, under the influence of the kinema. It also explains why the films became almost instantaneously popular and universal in Japan. The Japanese mind is instinctively more given to imagination and fancy than to reason: it loves illusion, to which tendency Buddhism directly contributed; and films are scarcely anything more than illusion. But this instinct has to be gratified in drama as fully as in any other branch of the nation's art. The rubrics in Japanese plays are usually sung, so that the audience is prepared for what is to come, even to having plain hints as to the meaning and significance of the scene.

Popular actors are in great demand, and very highly paid, receiving more income in a month than a prime minister in a year. From wealthy patrons they are accorded valuable gratuities, called 'flowers' (hana). And since women have

been allowed again on the national stage some of them have attained to fame both at home and abroad, and are now attracting audiences quite as much as men do. In Japan, as elsewhere, the green-room has been regarded as a realm of mystery and romance, and no less so to-day with the return of woman to the stage. In the old days the frequenters of the green-room often had their wives or female relatives present to assist them in making up for their parts. The story is told of a famous *onnagata*, or impersonator of female characters, who, after being superannuated at the age of seventy, still continued to haunt the green-room where his seasoned advice was invaluable to younger aspirants to fame. Once when a famous play was announced to return to the stage, in which a noted female character appeared, the aged *onnagata* made a laughing stock of himself in the green-room, by pleading with the management to be allowed to resume his rôle as a famous lady of sixteen. Among those who most objected to his revival of ambition was his wife, who considered him an old fool making of himself a still greater fool. Tingling under the sharp aspersions of his aged spouse, he nevertheless did not retaliate, but went out and persuaded the manager of the theatre at least to allow him to make up for the part of the young lady just for a joke in one rehearsal ; and his desire was granted. It was at once clear to all that the

old actor quite excelled any of his younger rivals in this difficult part. While thus made up for the maiden's part in the play, the old man returned to his home and pretended to be a young lady calling on the famous *onnagata*. His wife received the caller with due ceremony, never suspecting the guest's identity, but was not a little surprised to find a gay young woman calling on her old husband and speaking of him in the most familiar terms. So shocked was she by the general tone and attitude of the young lady that the social atmosphere of the visit suddenly grew frigid and the guest abruptly and discreetly departed. After transforming himself to his wonted appearance the old *onnagata* came home to his wife and began to converse in a friendly way, but found her still incensed, berating him soundly upon having an impudent huzzy of a girl call upon him. What business could he possibly have with such a person? Was she a secret admirer of his, and how long had he known her? The old man burst out laughing, which made his wife all the more angry. He then had the greatest difficulty to assure her that the young lady was no other than himself; his wife would not hear of it but accused him of merely trying to evade an awkward situation. She finally had to give in and admit that he looked and acted his part perfectly, and was therefore entitled to play the rôle of the famous maiden once again. Thus successfully to impersonate

a woman of sixteen would be considered the highest histrionic triumph for a man of seventy.

Another popular form of dramatic entertainment in Japan is the *yoseba*, or hall for story-telling. It is an evolution from the ancient travelling minstrel shows, if not a relic of it. The Japanese were accustomed to hear their fiction in this way long before we had books and magazines of fiction. Less expensive as well as less pretentious than the regular theatre and the music hall or the kinema, it yet rivals these in popularity with the impecunious multitude. To the simple and the illiterate it is what the cheap novel and the penny-dreadful are to the more immature and vapid-minded of the Occident. The *hanashika*, or professional story-teller, is held in scarcely less esteem than the ordinary actor, for he is often even more expert in enabling a jaded mind to pass an amusing hour. One of the most accomplished exponents of this art in the imperial capital for many years was an Englishman, born and brought up in Japan. In addition to the usual Japanese repertoire he had the unique advantage of being able to draw upon a fund of European legend, anecdote and fiction not accessible to his Japanese rivals.

The raconteur is always a favourite rôle in Japanese society. It is born in the blood, so to speak. The chanting or reciting of heroic tales is the oldest form of minstrelsy there, as elsewhere.

From the remotest period the great personages of the nation had their reciters, as had the lords of Europe, to preserve the more epical facts of history before history began to be recorded. They helped the people to remember things worth remembering. Japan has still her strolling story-tellers in plenty. They entertain the more rural sections of the empire, readily finding an appreciative wayside audience almost anywhere. Almost every temple still maintains such artists of its own, able to teach and expound dogma as well as point a moral, while amusing the temple's patrons. In the Occident Churches have their entertainers too, but they are less effective than in Japan.

But the greatest story-tellers do not travel much ; they have their own *yoseba* in great centres of population, where crowds gather every night to be amused. The tales told at these halls do not all attempt to point a moral ; nor are all of them fit for polite ears to hear. A Japanese audience prefers frank statement of detail in a tale, and is averse to mere veiled inuendo. The tales recited to dramatic action are of great variety, from *rakugo*, or comic episodes, to *kodan*, or heroic and tragic incidents, affording ample opportunity for display of histrionic talent. In these halls one may hear the eloquent and solemn declamation of the tragic actor, or the curious and well-worn *cliches* of the light comedian, every detail of the plot being acted with music, and

often with grotesque exaggeration. Some tales are sung like ballads to the accompaniment of a primitive lute called the *biwa*, probably the most ancient of all dramatic performances. But these *naniwabushi*, or chanted tales, are not all ancient ; the most modern socialistic and political ideas are often thereby discussed or propagated. Not infrequently the performance is diversified by the introduction of *ayatsuri*, or marionettes, or by juggling performances. But in all cases the principal thing is a good story well told.

The *yose* actor is paid so much per head of the audience present ; it amounts to anything from a farthing per head to a penny. After he finishes his part or story at one hall the actor may hurry off to another, and may double or treble his nightly income by appearing at two or three halls in the same evening. His total income may yet not amount to more than £3 or £4 a month.

The art of the *hanashika* is regarded by some Japanese as, in many respects, superior to that of the ordinary actor, because the desired effect has to be achieved without the advantage of costume, scenery and the usual theatrical appurtenances and environment adequate to arouse and hold attention. Success depends almost wholly on the intrinsic merit and personality of the *hanashika* himself. Often he has to impersonate four or five characters in one story.

The clever performer in this rôle can excite his audience to a high pitch of admiration and applause, and even move some to tears. As an example of a very simple type of tale that goes down well with the ordinary audience as an encore, the following was used by a *hanashika* :

A samurai was once walking along a street when his attention was attracted by a sign over a door to this effect : FENCING AND SWORD PRACTICE OF ALL SCHOOLS TAUGHT HERE. On going in to inquire about the terms for lessons, he was amazed to learn that no one living there taught, or even knew, anything about fencing and sword practice. Thereupon the officer demanded to know why they had put out the sign, and received the reply that it was only to frighten away thieves and robbers.

THE MINOR OFFICIAL

IN a land so distinguished for officialdom the above caption must represent rather a comprehensive term, but the red tape of a few specific sections thereof may be taken to illustrate the colour, tone and practice of the whole. The postal official and his subordinate, down to the delivery man, may be taken for a type that the public has most commonly to deal with. The ordinary postman, who delivers mail matter at the street door, is wretchedly paid, and therefore constantly under temptation to compensate himself by removing stamps of larger denomination from letters in the pillar-boxes. Stamps thus appropriated are not sold but deposited in the postal savings bank where small amounts are often paid in by stamps affixed to a deposit slip. To obviate temptation of this kind letters with heavy postage are often taken to the post office direct, instead of being dropped into a pillar-box. Other failings of the postman are still more human, as, for example, when he finds that the last item for delivery on a very hot day is a very unimportant post-card the address on which requires him to walk another half a mile. After hours of tramping about with a

heavy post-bag, in a temperature of between 80° and 100° in the shade, the last half mile is the limit. To retain the post-card until the next delivery, when he might feel more equal to extending his beat, would be risky, for it might be found on him; and consequently he is apt just to destroy it to shorten his journey and prevent detection. In one case the hated post-card was deposited in a stream which carried it miles away where it was found by a policeman, and the result was a prosecution.

Some postal officials are courteous and even deferential, while others are quite the opposite. But post office customers are often themselves to blame for inviting the treatment they receive. An Occidental, on entering a Japanese post office, should not forget that the officials are likely to suspect him of desiring to find them in the wrong. The foreigner has gained the reputation of being a chronic faultfinder. It has to be admitted, however, that there is some difference between native and foreign definitions of this weakness. When a certain foreigner brought a parcel to the post office he was told by the man in charge that the parcel could not be despatched by post because it did not correspond, in weight, with the postal regulations. The printed rates, by which the local post office was bound, gave the postage for parcels of one pound, a pound and a half, two pounds, and so on; but the parcel

in question represented none of the weights stated. It weighed more than a pound and less than a pound and a half. The foreigner, in his simplicity and generosity of heart, ventured to intimate that he was willing to pay for a pound and a half ; but the postal official protested that he was not authorized to charge for more than the actual weight, and in any case only for one of the weights mentioned in the printed instructions. Being a shrewd fellow, the foreigner abandoned simplicity for subtlety as soon as he saw the futility of argument, merely acquiesced, departed from the post office, went into a neighbouring shop, added to the parcel enough paper wrapping to bring the weight up to exactly a pound and a half, and then returned and posted it without further demur from officialdom.

A champion tennis player who was practising for a tournament snapped a string in his best racket ; so he parcelled it carefully and posted it off to a favourite mender to be restrung. The sender, after a few days, received a message from the local postal authorities asking him to call for a parcel that the postman was not allowed to deliver in the usual way. He hurried to the post office only to be told that there was postage to pay on the parcel before it could be handed to him. Unaccustomed to receive postal matter on which the postage had not been prepaid, he asked to be allowed to see the parcel, and at

once recognized it as containing the tennis racket he had posted some days before. Apparently it had never even been opened, for he saw his own handwriting on it. He protested that he had already paid the postage on it, and demanded to know why it had not been despatched, as he was waiting for the racket. Yes, they admitted, he had paid the postage, but that was to send it ; it had been duly sent, and the postage now asked was for its return. The foreigner wanted to know now why the man who mended and reposted the racket had not paid the return postage, since parcels were never accepted without postage. He was then informed that although the parcel had been despatched and had reached the office of destination, yet it could not be delivered because the post-master there discovered that the parcel was one inch beyond the regulation length for parcels, and consequently had sent it back to the original office to be returned to the sender as refused by the post office on the score of its being oversize. Thus, although it could not be accepted for transportation, it had been carried both ways by the post, and the sender had to pay postage on it both ways. Such incidents give the foreigner much food for thought, as well as some practice in patience and self-control. On the other hand, the postal official often proves to be so great a marvel of intelligence and efficiency that he compensates in large measure for his

numerous eccentricities. A letter some time ago reached the Tokyo post-office bearing no other than this address: 'j. brun, toko.' Speculation as to its destination and ownership began with the Canadian post office which despatched it on its journey. But the Tokyo post office discovered a foreign resident named J. Brown, insisted that it was his, though he stoutly denied it, but his it proved to be.

Next to the postal official, the collector of taxes is, perhaps, the most persistently eccentric; and there can be no wonder at this when his constituency is considered. His range is greatly restricted by the fact that those with an income of less than £15 a year pay no income-tax. To discourage evasion of taxes among the very rich, the Emperor annually confers a peerage on the citizen who pays the largest amount of income-tax. This opens a door for the purchase, if not the sale, of honours, for the person who pays the most gets the title. The greater the number of competitors the larger will be the inland revenue receipts, for the only hope of winning is to pay as much as possible, as competitors are not supposed to know the identity and wealth of their rivals. A remarkable aspect of the case is that the winner's income does not appear to be as high the following year. Whether the decline is due to the effort after the peerage, or to a desire to give others a chance, or to economic

circumstances, must remain a problem to the tax collector.

In Japan the tax collector is generally a more reasonable and humane personality than he is found to be in most Occidental countries. At least he reveals some degree of sympathy with his victims. His mistakes are not always in his own favour. A foreign business firm in Yokohama once received a tax bill for three farthings, not the usual tax for the year, but for some property that had been overlooked in the original assessment. This diminutive impost was entered on the ordinary official paper of the tax office in the same manner as if it were for a hundred pounds sterling. The debtor promptly handed over a penny in payment. The collector, not having at the moment a farthing to give in change, receipted the bill for the three farthings, and on the receipt credited the shop with one farthing on next year's tax. This arrangement not proving satisfactory to the head tax office, the odd farthing was returned by post to the shop owner, the postage on which was much more than a farthing. This scrupulous attention to minute sums of money, though a feature of government officialdom, is not peculiar to it, but is typical of the country. Those in the employment of Japanese houses of business or of government institutions find not infrequently that their salary is reckoned proportionate to the number of days or even

hours served, so that the exact sum due is handed over in an envelope containing the amount in native money ; yen, sen and rin, or, as we should say ; pounds, shillings, pence and farthings. There is no doubt that, in handling large sums of money, care of the farthings results in a considerable aggregation during the course of a year.

From an Occidental point of view Japanese railway officials expose themselves to an even greater degree of criticism than those of the post office or the tax office. Under the national railway system all the officials are regarded as representing the Government. They wear a regular uniform and are supposed to carry side-arms. Conductors on trains have police authority to arrest offenders against the railway regulations or against the law of the land. This authority, though sometimes exercised in a strange manner, is not altogether futile, for if a passenger misses a purse or a watch or any part of his luggage, which often happens, the train can be officially searched before it slows down or stops. The thief, if found, will be duly handed over to the authorities at the next station. The weather is so warm in summer that many passengers fall asleep ; which affords every opportunity to pick-pockets and other thieves. In imitation of Occidental railways there is placed above the ticket office of every Japanese station a notice to

the effect that the wicket will open fifteen minutes before the departure of the next train ; and this notice will be literally observed, no matter whether the queue at the wicket be made up of five or five hundred prospective passengers. Should the train arrive and depart before all are supplied with tickets there is nothing for the unfortunate ones to do but wait until the next train, for no one is permitted to come on the platform without a ticket. It is not considered extraordinary to miss a train for want of a ticket ; to wait for the next train is regarded as nothing to worry about. Once when an athletic foreigner, seeing that he could not obtain a ticket before the train departed, jumped the barrier and tried to board the moving train, he was promptly arrested and missed several trains as well as paid a fine in consequence.

A young Englishman, riding an ordinary push bicycle along a country road, had the misfortune to have it break in two under him, with a wheel attached to each part. Placing the parts on his shoulder he carried them to the nearest station and asked the porter to make a parcel and send the bicycle on by train. The porter made two separate parcels and wanted to charge for the transportation of two machines. While the foreigner was engaged in a debate with him as to whether it was a case of one bicycle or two, the train arrived and departed. After the two parcels were ready for shipment, another official

appeared, and agreed that there was really only one bicycle, and there should be but one parcel, with freight accordingly. While the porter was transforming the package from two back to one, the next train came and went. The patient foreigner had to content himself with catching the third train, paying for the carriage of himself and one bicycle.

THE POLICEMAN

AMONG the numerous representations of authority in Nippon is the Buddha of the thousand hands. And every policeman is one of the uncounted number of hands that direct the mysterious forces of law: he is the arm of the law, the guardian of the law and the censor of public and private morals as well as the arbiter of decorum. He naturally shares in that profound respect which the public owes to all public officials, especially to those associated with the judiciary. The policeman is a visible manifestation of that aspect of the imperial will which is in most immediate contact with the people; and so he must be treated with becoming deference. In no other country has the representative of law and order been surrounded by so conservative a tradition of infallibility; and in no other country is the man in the street in such awe of the police. And with good reason: for, once in the hands of the police, the fate of the individual is uncertain. He will be handled and dealt with, not so much in his own, as in State interest. The fiction of infallibilism has to be sustained. To escape unscathed requires a higher virtue than mere innocence; nor will the most impregnable

defence always convince the law to the contrary. The prisoner, invariably presumed guilty to start with, is examined in secret, an ordeal dreaded by even the most fearless no less than the most obdurate.

All officers of the police force are State officials, recruited mainly from the samurai class, and therefore regarded as gentlemen. In this aspect of the case fiction too finds a place. In Japan class is not decided by culture or character but by descent. On accosting an officer of the law, the civilian should salute, and then remove his hat, remaining uncovered until the interview is closed. During this time the officer will stand stiffly listening, as if to a telephone receiver, his chest expanding and his eyes glistening with self-importance, for the interlocutor has to be duly impressed with the majesty of the law.

The regulation police uniform is navy-blue cloth with brass buttons, in winter ; and for summer, white duck with brass buttons, and badges of rank on shoulder and arm. The change from winter to summer uniform occurs on a certain prescribed date in spring, without regard to weather or temperature at the time. It is, nevertheless, not altogether a sudden transformation, for the policeman exchanges his blue for white trousers first ; and some days subsequently, his blue coat for a white one. A white coat is never worn over coloured trousers in Japan, except sometimes in

the case of hotel boys. The police constable is always armed with a sword, but he has neither truncheon nor pistol. With the increasing use of pistols by robbers, there is likely to be a change in the police equipment ; even now a few officers carry fire-arms. A pair of white cotton gloves usually decorates the policeman's sword hilt.

To the pedestrian at a loss for direction the policeman is naturally the safest source of appeal, though popular experience will favour some inhabitant of the neighbourhood. This is an Occidental habit, however, for a Japanese considers it a duty to give the officer of the law his duty to do, as the ordinary citizen is not expected to be a map of the locality. The direction of strangers is the business of those appointed for that purpose by the law. Ask the way of the policeman, and he delivers his directions as carefully and as solemnly as a judge imposing sentence in court ; the inquirer is left with the impression that, whatever may have been his intentions before, he must now do what he is told by authority ; and so he feels obliged to go where he is directed, even though he knows it to be wrong. At least, he should pretend to do so, until beyond the reach of the official eye. Following police directions, therefore, may or may not lead to the destination desired, for an officer of the law is never expected to confess ignorance of anything. Such thoughtless honesty would ruin the official tradition for infallibility. For such

literal honesty as a police confession of ignorance one would have to travel far, perhaps as far as some London bobby suddenly placed in a strange environment. At least, such is the experience of an old and seasoned traveller. But no one connected with the judiciary of Japan has ever been known to acknowledge a mistake or to admit ignorance on any question. Indeed, it is a standing wonder that the police ever condescend to an examination of prisoners at all, since the assumption is that the details of the case are already perfectly known to the law. Even when a pedestrian is stopped on the street to tell the police what is in a parcel or a handbag, the suspicion is that the officer already knows the contents, and only thus condescends simply to test the honesty of the stranger. This is most apt to happen at night, however. Police interrogations always proceed with an air of omniscience that is very impressive.

The details of a Japanese policeman's duty are too minute and incidental for description here. But he is responsible for the conduct of the public to a far greater degree than in Occidental lands. He will be found standing at the end of a great bridge, keeping vehicles and pedestrians to the rule of the road. He is posted beside a semaphore in the centre of a busy street-crossing to regulate the traffic by signals to 'stop' or 'go.' He has to decide how far a citizen is justified in exposing his body to the fresh air on a sizzling-hot day when it

is very difficult to keep the overheated from tucking up their *kimono* skirts rather high. If the tail should be lifted above the belt line, the policeman's notice is at once attracted; he does not call out, but steps promptly forward, considerably taps the offender on the bare ham with his scabbard; and when the astonished victim shoots a sharp glance at the cause of his surprise and annoyance, he is perforce obliged to come to attention, while the officer orders him to put down his clothes and to proceed.

Thus the policeman can never forget that he is the censor of taste and morals no less than the maintainer of peace and order. If a little *geisha* girl escapes from her master in the city's gay quarters, the law officer has to capture her and see that she returns and agrees to complete her term of service. Should a daughter, rented or sold to the cotton mill, for so much a month, find the toil and confinement beyond endurance, and run away, the policeman must find her and bring her back to her fate. He has also to determine the ultimate destiny of human bodies, or portions thereof, found in canals or on the sea-front; he fixes the time and manner of the semi-annual house-cleaning and disinfecting for the district he patrols, and sees that it is properly carried out; he has to approve the paintings, picture post-cards, plays and films fit for public exhibition; the shape and size of the aprons worn by nude

statues ; order the prohibition of ' smell ' in districts through which great personages are announced to pass on a given day ; see that all dogs allowed on the street without collars are knocked on the head and come to a speedy end. He discovers that English dogs and Japanese dogs do not well agree, which only too often leads to still greater disagreement between their masters ; and so he is obliged to put up a notice near the offender's house : ' Englishman with dog must wear collar and be led by chain.'

As soon as a foreign guest arrives at a native inn, or even at a private house, the fact must be notified to the police. The stranger has to give his name, age, nationality, sex, parentage, bachelor or spinster, business and life purpose in general, or even particulars of a more private nature. A perusal of certain entries in hotel registers will indicate that some foreigners are loth to indulge in these revelations ; which explains why some tourists, judging by their ages inserted, are mere infants while others appear to be centenarians. For nationality one foreigner put himself down as ' a citizen of heaven,' not that he was from the Celestial republic across the straits, but he was the messenger of a religion that was anti-national. His admission proved of great inconvenience to him later, when the police affirmed that, among the list of countries with which Japan was in diplomatic relations, they could find no mention of

heaven, nor had the Foreign Office accepted any accredited representative from that country. They positively refused to be responsible for a man of no nationality. To prevent deportation he was forced to induce the consul of the country he had come from to register him among its nationals.

Once a month the policeman calls at your residence and inquires what changes have transpired in your affairs or in your family since his last visit. Though you reply 'None,' he will, nevertheless, require you to answer his former questions all over again, questions that you have answered in the same manner every month since your arrival. You gain nothing by insisting that the replies to all are exactly the same as last time. And so you have to labour in detail once again through the time-worn programme: Name? Age? Sex? Nationality? Married or single? Dead or alive? And in the same way give the age and sex of your father and mother, wife and children, and all your servants, until you are ready to succumb to impatience if not worse. The only way of escape is to be literally or even figuratively absent during this interrogation, leaving the chief housemaid to deal with the policeman. Some servants are reasonable and clever and will not admit that the head of the house is available, though humbugging the police is a risky venture at best.

The Japanese method of distributing the police on a beat is quite different from what we know at home. About every quarter of a mile there is a police-box, a tiny building about six feet square, containing a chair and a telephone, and a bunk for an officer to rest in while not on duty. In this box are placed three men, who are not relieved by their three successors for twenty-four hours. The twenty-four hours are divided up between the three officers : one will be always on the watch at the box to answer calls, another will be on his beat, and the third will be resting in the box. Thus every citizen knows he is not far from a police-box and is able to appeal to the police in case of need. When a policeman is about to place anyone under arrest, he does not, as a rule, have to lay hands on him. Nothing could be more unpardonable than to attempt to run away from the police. Only the lowest criminals are ever guilty of it. I have seen it happen only once, in the case of a boy who was so terrified that he lost his head and did not realize what he was doing, but he was soon sorry and repented bitterly. In making an arrest the officer approaches the person, accosts him politely, smiles and says : 'August pardon deign' ; to which the person so addressed responds ; 'Pray, do not mention it.' Upon which introduction, the officer requests the prisoner to accompany him to the police station where he is advised : 'Deign to enter august gaol.' In case the

prisoner is a hardened criminal likely to attempt escape, or to use violence he is attached to the officer by a rope, with his hands tied behind his back. In a struggle the police usually win, unless the culprit is of the most dangerous character. Such criminals have been frequently attacked by diminutive police officers single-handed and successfully arrested, though sometimes an officer is killed in the attempt.

Once in the clutches of the law, a prisoner's fate is regarded as uncertain, and consequently no one voluntarily risks the experience. After being arrested and locked up, any length of time may elapse without the prisoner knowing what he is confined for, or when he may expect freedom. He may or may not be permitted to see friends or to engage counsel, but usually not until his preliminary examination is over, which may be an indefinite time. A prisoner can be kept behind the bars indefinitely on the plea of undergoing preliminary examination. The *habeas corpus* conception of judicial treatment is apparently unknown. In this way a suspect can be incarcerated and made to suffer all the penalty of a judicial sentence without being proved guilty of any offence against the law, especially if the police have a grudge against him. Nor do foreigners escape such treatment if they come into the hands of the law, as the Court records will show.

The worst aspect of such unlimited authority

is the process of secret examination, and the possibility of resorting to torture to extract confession of guilt. The chief of police and the public procurator are the dominating personalities ; and they make out every detail of the prisoner's guilt before coming into court at all. Unless the prisoner is able to disprove their accusations he remains guilty. It seems that a prisoner must always confess before being brought to public trial. Sometimes the accused is not only forced to admit his guilt, but also to implicate others, rather than endure torture. Of course torture is illegal in Japan ; yet this form of eliciting confession in criminal cases is believed to be still practised, because of the official conviction that no Oriental can be expected to tell the truth except under torture. One sees occasional reference to it in the vernacular press.

The most common forms of torture are : suspending the body from a beam by a cord tied to the middle finger, the toes just touching the floor ; or suspending the body by the wrists. A severer form is to tie the hands behind the back and then let the body hang by the hands from a beam, which almost disjoints the shoulder blades. Another way is to enclose the body in a box that presses in tightly on all sides, and then pour water on the face until the verge of suffocation is reached ; also touching the body repeatedly with red hot irons, or pricking the body with sharp

splints ; causing the victim to kneel and then placing over the ankles a piece of timber on either end of which stands a policeman, almost dislocating the ankle joints. Twisting the joint of an arm to the point of dislocation is a common form of terrorizing a victim into admission of guilt. Some prisoners have affirmed that they were beaten on the head until almost unconscious ; and women were forced to confess by being paraded naked before the police. From such brutality the victims become physical wrecks, if they do not die. Of course it would be indignantly denied by officialdom that such inhuman treatment is ever inflicted on prisoners ; but so long as survivors of it can be found to affirm that they have thus suffered, even declaring in public court that their confessions have been thus forced, the public must remain doubtful in regard to official professions of innocence.

The police are also responsible for the proper control of newspapers, books and all kinds of publications, especially in regard to what is known officially as 'dangerous thought.' Just what is 'dangerous thought' is very vague ; all one can know about it is that it is what the police prohibit ; but just what they will prohibit one cannot know definitely. Thus the innocent are often penalized. Nothing that the police forbid can be printed or circulated. All periodical publications have to deposit with the authorities a sum of money as a

guarantee of good behaviour, before they can obtain a publisher's licence. Every time they offend against the press law, or against police orders, a fine is deducted from the deposit. All that the offender knows is that he is summoned to the police office, told that the current issue of his publication is confiscated, and that the fine is so much. There is no appeal except one so expensive that it would not justify the trouble. If the editor complains, he may be told that he can well afford the fine, because the publication was not confiscated until all the current issue was sold out. When the deposit is exhausted in fines, it has to be renewed or the licence will be cancelled and then the periodical has to cease publication. Foreign insurance companies also have to deposit a heavy guarantee fund in Japan, against the payment of insurance. In this way the State increases its revenue, and has at its disposal large sums of money without interest.

Police censorship extends also to public meetings of all kinds, and even to the speeches made at them. In order to obtain permission for a meeting, the subject to be discussed has to be stated ; and if it is a subject likely to touch upon ' dangerous thought ' a copy of the speeches to be made should be submitted to the police, so that the remarks to which exception is taken may be blue-pencilled. During the meeting a policeman in uniform will be posted at the main entrance inside the door, to see

and hear all that goes on. If a speaker utters an objectionable sentiment, or idea, the officer holds up his palm and says, 'Oi ! Oi !' If the speaker persists in attempting to complete his sentence, or to continue the subject, he is promptly placed under arrest. But, as a rule, he cuts off and begins on another tack. Very often the audience is with the speaker and against the police, and does not hesitate to say and act so. Then the fun begins. The officer at the door seizes and attempts to arrest someone near him, who has made disrespectful remarks about the police. Half a dozen sympathizers rise and pounce on the policeman. He has several other officers in civilian clothes in the audience ready for just such an emergency. These now take a hand, and the *mêlée* is indescribable. The meeting is completely broken up : which is just what the police desire. There are politicians so shrewd in address, however, that they can sometimes convey 'dangerous thought' by a system of indirection and circumlocution difficult for the police to control. The speaker intimates that he intended to say this, and that, and so on ; but the police have interfered and he will be unable to say it. And thus he gets his innings before he is stopped.

THE JUDGE

IN Japan law is regarded as a direct expression of the imperial will, and, therefore, its representatives acquire a majesty and inspire an awe not realized elsewhere. Since native tradition tolerates no distinction between ethics and custom, moral requirements and social obligations are equally and explicitly set forth in law, so that any breach of either may involve official attention varying from a police rebuke to a judicial penalty. This is especially significant in a country where religion reveals no moral code, and both ethics and decorum have to depend on civil law. The law is not merely an expression of the nation's attitude to crime: it includes conduct in general. The only sin is dishonour to the State and the Imperial Ancestors that created the State. If pushed to its logical conclusion this spirit would make Japanese more rationally moral than Occidental society, for then it would forbid not only crime but the sin that inspires crime. But since patriotism and ethics are almost identical, morality is a political and social rather than a personal or individual consideration. Yet the character of society must depend on the character of the individuals that

compose it. A civilization based more upon communal or national than upon individual or personal ethics and morality must appear historically less stable, because the individual loses personality in the State, and the State cannot be more moral than the individuals it comprises.

The Japanese system has, however, produced jurists of remarkable distinction and character, though their number has not been impressive. In former times, while ethics was a matter of public concern, law was usually secret. Certain prohibitions were posted in public places for the few who could read them ; but every family was expected to bring up its members to know what was expected of them. The judge had to consider the fact that the accused should know good behaviour from bad, even if ignorant of the law. Suppression of the legal code was supposed to exercise a greater degree of intimidation on the general mind, since the risk of violating law appeared greater, and so inspired a more careful circumspection among the masses. By forcing society to instil into the minds of its members what the law required, the control of society became more effective, for no one knew just when there might be a conflict with law. Each family and community had its official head who was responsible for the conduct of those under him. The village headman had to settle the disputes arising within his jurisdiction ; and the

members of the community preferred thus to adjust their disputes, for it was a serious thing to come under the notice of legal officials ; the aim of everyone was to avoid the courts.

Prior to the period of statute law the judge often exercised a wider degree of discretion and mercy than is apt to be the case under the modern Japanese system of jurisprudence where he feels under obligation to follow the letter of the law. The public procurator holds the judge to the statute book, so he cannot feel so free to let circumstances alter cases. Once when a man was brought before the famous judge, Oōka, charged with having killed a sacred deer of the Kasuga temple at Nara, the judge delivered a verdict that is still narrated in Japanese school books as a marvel of wisdom and judicial sagacity. It appears that one of the tame deer wandered from the temple park into the road and made its way into the village where it began to eat from a tub of bran in front of a shop. The owner of the shop attempted to drive the animal away, but it persisted in returning and helping itself to the bran, much to the poor man's loss and annoyance : so he hurled a stone which hit the deer on the head and it died. To slay one of the sacred deer, dedicated to the Sun Goddess, was a crime equal to murder, for which the penalty was death. The merchant was promptly apprehended and haled before the court. When asked

to state his defence, the accused pleaded that he had not intended to kill the animal, but merely to frighten it ; and that, in any case, he thought it was a dog. As there was no evidence presented to the contrary, the court decided that judicially the animal was a dog ; for, since the State had made ample provision for the feeding of the deer belonging to the Kasuga temple, it was contrary to all reason that one of them should be so hungry as to run away and steal food from a poor merchant. By this legal fiction the life of an innocent man was saved, and the public applauded the benevolence of the judgement.

At the same time there is an element of uncertainty pertaining to this aspect of the judicial mind in Japan that opens a way for eccentricity, if not caprice ; it is often disconcerting to the foreign litigant in native courts, as he cannot avoid the suspicion that the judge may not adhere strictly to the letter of the law, which, after all, is apt to favour justice more than a spiritual interpretation thereof. Departure from the letter leaves loopholes for the entry of racial, local or other less spiritual elements alien to justice. The modern judge labours under the difficulty of having to respect tradition while giving due respect to new codes of law. Hitherto the Japanese judge has had to decide the case entirely on his own responsibility, without the assistance of a jury ; and, apart from the scrutiny

of the procurator and the lawyer for the defence, could decide how far justice should be tempered with mercy. Recently provision has been made for the empanelling of a jury in certain cases, but whether the change will further the ends of justice is a question, since the jury is likely to be almost wholly in the hands of the ablest lawyers. In Japan the salary of a judge is hopelessly inadequate to such a position ; the temptation to bribery must be great ; yet offences of this kind are seldom if ever in evidence. We must remember that in most European countries strict justice, as a matter of course, is but of comparatively recent achievement. This is no less true of Japan. The present judiciary is a great contrast to the old days when a celebrated judge happened to be bribed by both sides and delivered a verdict so ambiguous as to be equally favourable to plaintiff and defendant. The modern judge is usually a young barrister who has not found his profession sufficiently remunerative at the bar to induce him to decline the opportunity of ascending the bench ; for a man of distinction could not financially afford to abandon practice at the bar for a judgeship.

Japanese courts assume the accused to be guilty until he can produce satisfactory evidence to the contrary, which, especially in the case of poor and ignorant offenders, is a serious disadvantage. It is true that if the accused is too poor

to engage counsel, the court will supply one, or allow one to be selected from among the many waiting for such invitations. But there is little time or facility thus to prepare a defence. The public procurator is often a person of wider judicial experience and skill than the judge before whom he brings the case, and is therefore likely unduly to influence the bench. The procurator comes into court with his case fully made out against the prisoner; the accused is expected to have already confessed his guilt. The judge has to assure himself that there is no flaw either in the procurator's evidence or in his argument, and that no illegal means have been used to force confession from the prisoner at the bar. If the latter suddenly declares that there is no truth in the charge, nor in the confession, because it was forced by torture, the consequence is rather embarrassing to the court. If the prisoner has been spared torture on condition that he stand by his confession or ultimately face torture, he may stand by his confession as the easiest way out of his troubles.

It is obvious from the records of Japanese courts that the judge is often under temptation to resort to the methods of Solomon, the Hebrew king of old, in order to ascertain the truth. The story is told of an egg-dealer who once had some of his property stolen from a tub of bran in front of his shop. He had his suspicion as to who the thief

might be, and only gave the police a hint. The police consulted the judge, who said that unless the merchant could produce definite evidence to convict the person suspected, the police must bring to the court several other persons as well. This was accordingly done. On the day of the trial five women stood before the bar. The judge addressed them and said that they were all accused of stealing eggs, but he presumed that only one of them was guilty ; he assured them that the innocent among them need have no fear, as he could quite easily detect the guilty one because she would have the smell of bran on her hands, so his first duty would be to smell the hands of each. Then the judge turned carelessly away from them and pretended to be adjusting his books and papers for a moment, during which space he noticed that one of the women slyly put her hands up to her nose. After completing the smelling investigation the judge accused this woman, and she admitted that she was the culprit.

The Japanese law codes are based on the code Napoleon modified by German law, and some of the old Japanese codes. There are, for the administration of law, all the courts usual in other countries, with a Court of Cassation at the top for trial of those accused of treason, which trials are conducted in secret. Some years ago were brought before this court twenty-six prisoners accused of plotting against the Imperial House of

Japan ; as the trial was in secret the public had to take the opinion of the court that they were guilty ; and all were condemned to death. The Emperor, however, commuted the sentence of thirteen to life imprisonment ; and the other thirteen, including the leader, Kotoku and his wife, were executed. An interesting aspect of this trial was that a British consul was asked to be present, presumably to assure Japan's ally that although the trial was in secret, the accused were not condemned without adequate evidence of guilt. It is doubtful, none the less, whether a foreigner, however learned in Japanese language and law, would have been able to follow intelligently the arguments of counsel and the adjustment of evidence before such a court.

During the serious unrest in Korea after the formal annexation of the peninsula to Japan, a number of natives one day were arrested by the gendarmerie and brought before the Japanese court, accused of being rebels. The controlling motive of the court was to ascertain whether the prisoners were fugitive soldiers of the disbanded Korean army, in which case they would undoubtedly be rebels and guilty of treason, or whether they were simple farmers forced to take up arms by the rebels, in the event of which the penalty would be much less severe. On these points the court was faced with insoluble doubt. But the judge ordered straw to be brought, and commanded

the prisoners to make five pairs of sandals each. Making straw sandals is the usual winter occupation of all Korean farmers, and the Korean unable to make sandals is no farmer. The judge knew this. Happily the test was successful in favour of the prisoners, for each of them soon produced five well-made pairs of sandals, and thus proved himself a true son of the soil and no soldier. After lecturing the men on the nature of the offence with which they were charged, the judge allowed them to go on condition that they promised to become loyal citizens and gave no more trouble. Whether, after that, rebels made sure of being expert sandal-makers does not appear, though this inference is unavoidable.

In a certain Japanese village some time ago, a thief, when departing from a house he had robbed, left the track of his foot distinctly in the mud. The police ordered all the villagers to assemble at the spot and have their feet compared with the impression left behind by the burglar. None of the feet fitted the track in the mud. The offender, therefore, did not belong to the village. But when the villagers were counted, one was missing. The absent one never reappeared, and is still, like Cain, a wanderer on the face of the earth, unable to return to his native village.

THE ASSASSIN

ALL heathen civilization is based on the assumption that human beings may be, and even must be, divided into two classes : superiors and inferiors. Superiors have rights, but no duties ; inferiors have duties, but no rights. Duties are imperative ; rights are concessions. Justice, though nominally present, is really absent, because verdicts are the result of force. The strongest wins. For the most part relations between man and man are based on power rather than on law or right. Generally speaking, the superiors have the inferiors at their mercy, exploiting them in the interests of their masters. It is the duty of inferiors to serve their superiors ; and it is the right of superiors to command such service.

The result is that the weak can get even with the strong only through some form of violence, by rendering evil for evil. This leads to the emergence of the assassin. Assassination may assume the form of individuals taking personal revenge, or of an organized band creating a strike, or even revolution. In Japan military efficiency is able to suppress strikes and avert revolution, but not wholly prevent assassination. Though Japanese

society is under the direction and the protection of a modern judiciary, its evolution has been too sudden and artificial to ensure universal justice ; for, as is usual in such cases, the tendency is to follow tradition and custom rather than law, or even the principles of social progress. Consequently, in the past, the *gorotsuki* and the *soshi* have played a prominent part in political, social and industrial affairs. The *gorotsuki* works mainly through blackmail, and the *soshi* through physical intimidation. From the ranks of either may rise the assassin.

If a politician, or a merchant, has a stubborn rival, with whom it is not easy to compete, the *soshi* is ready to remove the obstacle, for a consideration. The fact that *soshi* gangs are still able to make a living in this way proves that they do not lack employment. Once having undertaken the task, the *soshi* sends a warning to his victim that the latter's conduct or policy is objectionable, and must cease, or trouble will ensue. Should a parliamentary candidate receive such a warning, he knows that he cannot contest the constituency without facing danger to himself or his property, or both. He may know also that the source of this danger is his political rival, and his minions, but he has no way of proving it, and so the law is no protection. Nor does he find much facility for ascertaining who the *soshi* is, that menaces him ; the warning is, of course, anonymous. Few

politicians, trade rivals, editors, or even private individuals, care to defy the challenge of the *soshi*. If they should do so, they would be waylaid and beaten up or killed, according to the nature of their offence.

To what extent the penalty of defiance will prove tragic depends very often on the degree of prominence occupied by the victim, in society or in the State. The more important the person, the more crucial is the situation and the more dangerous the act of defiance. Persons of very high position, like famous statesmen, cabinet ministers, millionaires and government officials are seldom let off with a beating: they are usually assassinated. In settling scores with those so highly placed death is considered the more effective way to settle an argument. The cause of the evil, fancied or alleged, must be completely removed. Though this end is seldom attained by such violence, yet every assassination is a warning that has a sobering effect on public opinion and even on State policy. A vital question of patriotism is usually involved; and the object of the warning knows that he must yield or die. This menace keeps many able men out of politics, and out of public life, for no one can accept public office without taking his life in his hands.

For the elimination of traitors in high life there is a regularly organized assassination club,

known as the *Genyosha*, consisting of a band of rabid patriots pledged to lay down their own lives in ridding the nation of treason: that is, disloyalty to ruler, to national sentiment, to sacred tradition and custom. To say or do anything likely to reflect on the honour of Japan is to invite the attention of the *Genyosha*, a mistake of which no one cares to be guilty. When the deed is done the assassin always takes his own life, if he can, to prove his sincerity. It is the undertaker rather than the judge who has to adjust the consequences. And the assassin often has a bigger funeral than his victim. By this tragic means some of Japan's most distinguished statesmen and financiers have made their exit from this life. It is always a decidedly serious situation when any public man finds his conception of duty in conflict with that of the ultra-patriotic element. Few are found to stand the test, for the average official is careful not to offend national sentiment or policy, and if he should inadvertently do so, he is quick to make amends by prompt resignation, which always saves face. Nevertheless, as one looks back over the last few decades of Japanese history, some distinguished names are seen to have faced the assassin and thus died for their country. The difficulty is that the assassin is regarded as having died in equal devotion to duty and to country.

It is neither pleasant nor desirable to go into

details with regard to facts so well known to all who are familiar with the history of Japan ; but one incident may be mentioned in order to show just how the *Genyosha* policy works in a case where tragedy is sometimes averted. Some years ago a certain foreign nation notified the Japanese government that two subjects of the foreign Power, guilty of treason, had taken refuge in Japan ; and asked that they be deported or handed over to the police of the foreign country. The *Genyosha* objected to the acquiescence of the Japanese authorities in this request, on the ground that it was a reflection on Japan's sovereignty and honour thus to take orders from any foreign Power, and that, in any case, the refugees were not really guilty of anything more serious than disloyalty to a government that was a foreign aggression in their country. Although existing treaties and even international courtesy implied that Japan should concede its request so respectfully tendered by a friendly nation, the authorities while formally agreeing to do so, were yet actually unable to fulfill their promise without defying the *Genyosha* and exposing to assassination the life of the officials responsible. While the authorities were hesitating, ostensibly to make investigations, the *Genyosha* solved the difficulty in a bloodless manner by spiriting the two refugees beyond the reach of either the Japanese or any other police. It was an awkward moment for

both nations. But four lives were saved: the two refugees, the Japanese official who would have been responsible for obeying the foreign request, and the patriot who would have to despatch himself after despatching the official.

If officials stand in awe of the assassin, much more do all of lesser degree and position. When the assassin who attempted to blow up the late Prince Okuma for proposing that a foreign judge should be allowed to sit beside a Japanese judge when the accused was a foreigner, succeeded only in blowing off the victim's leg and killing himself, a great monument was afterwards erected to the assassin's memory and unveiled by Prince Okuma himself. The judge who presided at the trial of the youth who assassinated the late Prime Minister, Hara, refused to send him to the scaffold, because he accepted the lad's plea that the deed was done for purely patriotic reasons; the judge practically agreed to the contention that a public man should be very careful never even to seem to allow party politics to take precedence to national interest, and thus dishonour the nation as well as expose himself to the enmity of patriotic clubs. Homicide without malice aforethought is not murder, in Japan. In this case an awkward situation was created, by the assassin being prevented from despatching himself, as he was seized by the police at the moment he ran the Prime Minister through with the dagger, and so

had to be brought before a judge, thus exposing the judge to the attention of the *Genyosha*.

If it be asked how a system so anomalous, and so well known, can still persist under so highly a civilized government, the only answer is that many believe that it has a sobering effect that renders officialdom more circumspect; and, if there was a strong official movement against the rabid patriotic societies, even more officials would lose their lives than at present. A similar system of intimidation was adopted in Ireland during the latter years of the controversy over Home Rule, nor has it quite died out yet. In Japan there are few sections of society or politics to which the system is not useful at times. Once the sympathy of the *Genyosha* has been elicited for any movement it is sure to win, for few will care to oppose it.

The *gorotsuki*, or blackmailers, are a more frequent affliction, and at times become a real pest, preying on the more helpless and humble section of the community; they make an easy living simply by intimidation of their fellow countrymen. Usually a message is sent to the victim, signed in the blood of the sender; merchants, office clerks, and ordinary folk, may get such a message, asking for contributions, usually for some patriotic fund, of which the sender is a self-appointed agent. If the response is unsatisfactory, the offender will have reason to fear

molestation ; he can never go out at night without being in terror of violence. The *gorotsuki* do not, of course, belong to so exalted a class as the *Genyosha* club. If they are caught they do not commit suicide ; they may have to go to prison for a few months, but their colleagues outside carry on and make up for absent partners ; the latter are having a holiday with free quarters. The only reason why the public tolerates the existence of such characters is that there is a spirit of intense reticence with regard to the affairs of others ; it pays not to meddle in other people's business, even when they are robbed or engaged in robbing. Every one who makes up his mind to hand over a *gorotsuki* to the police has also to make up his mind how to escape the attentions of the man's friends. This accounts for the attitude of the average Japanese in feigning indifference to quarrels and even to personal assaults on others in the street ; he often stands by and fails to come to the relief of the victim thus attacked, to the disgust of the more public-spirited foreigner. In the old days it was a matter of life and death thus to interfere.

In times of great national crises both *soshi* and *gorotsuki* are very busy keeping an eye on affairs, ticking off those that seem to offend. At the time of the great earthquake in 1923, the rabid patriots believed that so cataclysmic a disaster could only have been due to some insult to the

national deities ; and so they turned out in force by night and killed off all they supposed to be thus guilty : socialists, communists, various labour leaders, all of whom were believed to hold republican or anarchic views. The leaders in this form of divine appeasement were duly apprehended in time, but got off lightly, for patriotism covers a multitude of sins.

Even the common thief will prove an assassin if he is cornered ; and consequently one has to be very careful in dealing with him. The country has plenty of robbers, burglars, foodpads, pickpockets and even pirates. Sometimes in trams, when passengers crowd too much at the door, blocking both exit and entrance, the conductor will shout to them to move along, as there is a pickpocket at the door ; after which advice there is a general movement forward. It is no joke, for in trams one has to keep guard over one's pockets. The same precaution is essential in trains, especially at night, when many travellers are drowsy. The custom that Occidental ladies have adopted in carrying large purses in public is a dire temptation to thieves in Japan ; the increasing habit of bag-snatching shows that it is irresistible. But why should ladies thus feel under obligation to provide the thief with such an opportunity ?

The most objectionable and dangerous of all these characters is the burglar who enters dwelling

houses at night, determined to allow nothing to prevent him getting what he wants, if it is there. He usually gains entrance by forcing the kitchen door ; then he gags and binds the servants and pursues his way through the house. It is rather difficult for the foreign householder to lie quietly in bed gazing patiently at a thief going through his trouser-pockets and his wardrobe or chest of drawers, looking for money ; and yet no interest whatever must be taken in the burglar, if life is to be spared. The intruder always carries a dagger in his sleeve, and anyone who molests him will be thrust through with it. Several foreigners have lost their lives by proving unable to take the police advice, always to receive and entertain a burglar as an ordinary guest, even to the extent of offering tea and cake, and then accommodating him as he requests. There is not much satisfaction in shooting the aggressor, and then being tried for murder. It is better to let the robber alone ; and if he takes anything very much prized, apply to the police for it ; the police know the president of the burglars' guild, and, with threats to the rank and file, will probably be able to get back the stolen property, unless it is cash. But no prudent person ever keeps money in the house except once a month, when all bills have to be presented for payment. It is a wise precaution, however, to keep on hand a small purse in case of a visitation from a burglar, for it is difficult to

persuade him that there is absolutely no money in the house.

Pirates are not so plentiful or so aggressive as in ancient times when the Japanese were thus accustomed to terrorize and plunder the coasts of China and Korea, as well as their own ; but this crime is still committed in Japan, as it is in China. The modern pirate haunts the secret coves and bays of the island in the Inland Sea ; he is extremely shrewd, and the police have the greatest difficulty in identifying and arresting him. The pirates operate in gangs under a captain, dividing into crews of eight or ten. Each crew mans a fast motor boat, well armed, and steals in upon passing sail boats and small steamers, holds up the officers and crew, and then plunders the boat, sometimes even taking away women.

THE HUMORIST

FEW countries can provide the jaded tourist with more good-natured merriment than Japan. Assuredly it would be difficult to find a civilization more fertile in those absurd contrasts and incongruities that radiate humour. Nor is it lessened in any degree by the unconscious manner in which it seems so often to be afforded, but rather the reverse. This Oriental indifference to our view of the ludicrous frequently forces us into smiles, and even fits of laughter, to an extent not to be experienced elsewhere.

Nor yet in Japan does the humorous more often derive from the ludicrously incongruous than from the uncannily uniform. Duplicates are often more funny than opposites. We know how an infant may be so exact an image of a parent as to become a source of amusement. The Japanese are often humorous simply because they are so much alike. The foreigner sees endless numbers of human beings who seem to him almost identical in appearance ; eyes and hair the same colour ; all faces the same complexion ; all stature the same proportions ; everyone wearing the same style of dress and footgear, eating the same food,

following the same amusements, fearing the same deities, obsessed by the same esoteric ideas: such abounding and pervasive similarity is generative of humour. In Japan the Creator reveals a greater sense of humour than elsewhere, or else such faces as one meets in Japan would never have been born. With the help of *Punch* the English are enabled to see themselves as the gods made them and regard them; but in Japan the gods have as yet devised no adequate means of thus expressing opinion. But artists in black and white are now taking to journalism and the Japanese will soon be able to see themselves as they are.

The Japanese laugh, of course, but not so often at what excites our risibility. We are compelled to smile as circumstance prompts, but the Japanese as circumstance prescribes. They are still as Oriental as the Old Testament which decides that there is a time to laugh and a time to weep, though they always prefer laughter to tears. They laugh not at what is laughable but at what custom and tradition make it obligatory to laugh at. To smile or to look grave inopportunistly is contrary to national etiquette. The more tragic no less than the more comic aspects of life are often equally wreathed in smiles. In this, perhaps, the children of the gods are not altogether singular, for do not the English think a boxing fray as amusing as the Spanish think a bull fight, and the

Japanese a *harakiri* scene on the stage? In old Japan there were occasions when smiles and laughter had to adhere strictly to rule; regulations for facial expression were so minute as to prescribe the degree of dental armament a smile might reveal while in the presence of a superior. During centuries of such rigid regimentation facial expression became stereotyped and laughter instinctively opportune. The face of an inferior should always smile in the presence of a superior, no matter what the relations between them. In former times a *samurai* with impunity could cut down and decapitate a common man who failed to show him the respect due to his rank. Consequently it is not safe to assume that the proverbial smile, that 'never comes off,' is always impelled by a sense of humour or even of good humour. It is more often due to a sense of duty, or fear of giving offence. The saddest hour of grief, the most tragic moment of existence, no less than the keenest touch of humour, all alike break into smiles. No smile is more winning than that of the assassin about to thrust his victim through with a sword. Thus the gulf between sorrow and joy is never exposed; and life is mollified by a cheerful countenance. Accordingly few are as happy as they seem; the universal smile seldom goes deep enough to be cordial, and not infrequently it is mere hysteria. Yet the conventional smile is preferable to a conven-

tional frown : it does make the wheels of life run more smoothly. The commonest incidents and duties of daily routine are thus transfigured by a genial courtesy that takes neither pain nor comfort quite seriously.

If in Japan the range of laughter is wider than with us, the reasons for laughter are more restricted, except to the foreigner. The Japanese smile more often than we do, but not at the same things. Their sense of humour is more simple than ours, if also less keen. A man chasing his top hat down the street in a hurricane would be a tragic rather than a comic figure in Tokyo, but yet if he should collide with something or somebody and fall, he would create roars of laughter. The average Japanese sees neither wit nor humour in our most celebrated comic weekly. An Englishman addressing a Japanese audience has to be careful to take his hearers into his confidence and explain to them when he is joking, not omitting the point of the joke, lest he should be taken seriously with disastrous results. This is particularly necessary in the case of a purely Occidental joke or an amusing story. To ensure hitting it off affably and pointedly the stranger would be well advised to learn Japanese jokes and stories for purposes of illustration.

The fact is that the Japanese sense of humour has had a different discipline from ours. Should we, or should we not, see any humour in having

our wives selected for us by our numerous relatives? The Japanese accepts the wife provided for him just the same as he accepts the seat she offers him in the tram car, even though it was relinquished in her favour by a courteous foreigner. Both the foreigner and the Japanese smile over the incident, but not for the same reason. We regard a man proceeding down the street in a suit of white knitted under-clothing, a bowler hat and wooden clogs, as a highly disconcerting if not a humorous figure, especially if he seems to consider himself in the height of fashion, bowing politely to his acquaintances by the way, all of whom regard him apparently as quite passably clad; but in Japan he would not be regarded as anything out of the way. Had the man been nine-tenths nude, as sometimes happens, he would have attracted less notice than a well dressed Occidental. Still more impressive than a man in nature's garb would be an Occidental with blue eyes and red hair or beard; for the one would be, at the worst, quite human, while the other would be regarded as a denizen of the nether regions, since in native art, as displayed in temples and theatres, only devils have blue eyes and red hair.

Our Occidental sense of humour can always be sure of finding something in common with that of the Japanese so long as we mutually regard evil as essentially funny and the devil a wag.

Evil is humorous because it is incongruous. Like a shadow, it distorts the truth while bearing witness to it. Evil is serious only when mistaken for the truth. Evil personified is distinctly humorous, and yet cannot be altogether despised. One cannot forget that it is inimical. The devil is undoubtedly an enemy and a danger ; but, just as we do not always find bad people useless, so the Oriental does not always despise the help he thinks evil, or even the devil, may give. In other words, the Oriental sense of humour is not highly developed. In neither Japan nor China is it considered wholly disreputable to be on terms with devils or even to be a devil, because devils are often objects of worship ; for how can one expect to command the services of those one does not respect ? Just as there are bad men and good men, so there are bad and good demons ; all demons have great power at their command ; and power, like money, is not to be despised. In the Orient there are millions of people worshipping deities that break the whole Ten Commandments. If it savours of humour to us, it is not so to them. Good demons or deities will do good in any case, and one need not worry about them ; it is the evil deities that gravely concern mankind. The Oriental cannot understand how people who regard the devil as a clever and powerful personage can yet rationally treat him as if he were nobody. At any rate when

the Oriental calls the Occidental a 'white devil' the latter should not take it as an intentional insult. It may indeed be a term of respect, if not endearment. We have still traces of the same idea among us, as when we hear a man say: 'He is a devilish nice fellow.' When the mayor of a Chinese city, desiring to acknowledge gratefully the many services rendered to his country by a British consul in time of famine, sent a beautiful present addressed 'To the Great White Devil Consul-General —,' he implied no disrespect, but the very opposite. Orientals regard those who outwit them or benefit them as representatives of power, wisdom, achievement, whether moral or not; nor do they esteem the white variety as essentially different. To us there is here an element of humour that is undetected by the Oriental mind.

In a civilization where the past and the present, the antiquated and the modern, the theoretical and the practical, the abstract and the concrete, are so inextricably conflicting and mixed, there is plenty of humour and fun, mostly full of wonderment, approaching even the bizarre. So confused is this stage of transition between the old and the new Japan that one often fails to distinguish between the one and the other, or even sometimes to find any trace of the twentieth century. Dazzling electric lamps send shafts of light into the unblinking eyes of the ancient

gods ; the top hat ponderously crowns the head of men clad in graceful silk *kimono* ; nightgowns of European cut make summer costumes for Tokyo tradesmen ; electric trams clear the city streets of chickens, as often by driving over them as by driving them away, after the manner of motor cars on English country roads ; pedestrians not infrequently suffer the same fate, East and West ; cattle do not appear quite happy promenading the thoroughfares of Japanese cities among trams and buses, all in file tied to each others' tails, a calf added to its mother's caudal appendage here and there in the procession. It is all very humorous to us, but only to us. It is possible that people who take off their clothes in a heavy shower to keep them dry are more thoughtful and practical than we are who prefer to get soaked through ; the carpenter who does not wear overalls but discards his trousers to save soiling them, and to save his wife an extra effort on washday, may be a cleaner as well as a wiser man than our artificers. Think too of the vast amount of expense saved by the Japanese in dispensing with such futile decorations as bathing suits, and also by washing the community in the village bath rather than put the tax-payers to the expense of a separate tub for each family.

The Japanese have what is to us the humorous habit of treating inconveniences as illusions. Whether this is intuitive with them, or has been

acquired through Buddhist influence, is a question. If it be true, as some Buddhist sects affirm, that existence is an evil and life an illusion, there is a sense of humour evident in the tendency to regard what one likes as reality and what one does not like as an illusion. Christian Scientists have recently arrived to compete with Buddhism in this land of illusions, and delusions. The humour of the situation is that while the theory may work for you as a creditor it may be no use to you as a debtor. Sins may be treated as illusions, for a time at least, but debts, especially taxes, have a habit to being regarded as realities. Revenue officers and private citizens are in hopeless conflict as to what, and how much, is to be regarded as illusory. Law courts, fines, prisons and such things, prove illusory only for a time. But any theory that evades reality is bound to find adherents; even these find eventually that the Ten Commandments are not any more fussy than they ought to be. The temptation to regard rights as realities and duties as illusions is too powerful a motive in all countries to be put down as peculiarly Japanese.

This is not to say that a belief in illusions is wholly illusory or useless, even in Japan. We have seen how it works in regard to clothing. Here even the law itself will accept illusions. When one sees people on the streets on a hot day dressed only in football shorts made of netting the mesh

of which is at least an inch wide one must remember that they are simply fulfilling the law that, within city limits, no one is allowed to appear on the street without clothing. The notion that a piece of rope stretched across the water of a public bath can be regarded as a partition to prevent promiscuous bathing is obviously an illusion, but only from an Occidental point of view ; that is because a rope is no bar to an Occidental unless there is death at the end of it. On the other hand, when a Japanese gentleman, after comfortably settling himself in the hot water of a public bath, suddenly espies his neighbour's wife basking in similar comfort on the other side of the linear prohibition, he knows that neither of them can regard as an illusion his duty to rise in a dignified manner and properly recognize the lady by bowing to her in a polite manner, after which he is free to subside to his ablutions as if nothing had happened. It is nevertheless the duty of all fellow bathers on both sides to treat the incident as an illusion ; it is indeed one of those crucial moments of life that may be seen but not observed.

In touring through the less travelled sections of the country, it is not to be considered strange or even humorous for an Occidental guest at an inn to find himself conducted by a pretty maid to the bathroom where he will be informally introduced to an appreciable if not an appreciative

company, there for the same purpose as himself ; some of them, probably relatives, will be found sharing a common tub. A father and his little son are disporting themselves in one tub ; a mother and two babies in another ; three girls in another ; a weary old man splashing much in a fourth tub, and so on ; while the one empty tub awaits the pleasure of the last-comer. If the stranger stands stockstill, as if transfixed by the pain of embarrassment, of course he will be noticed ; his companions will be grieved if not alarmed at his hesitation. Far better for him to treat their bows of welcome with reciprocity and retire to the bath to which they are pointing him, and treat the entire environment as an illusion ; which, from an Oriental point of view, it is ; for none of his newly-made companions, except perhaps the children, would consider him worth looking at. On one such occasion when a learned professor from the Occident found himself in the above predicament, he was so paralysed with amazement, and even horror, that all he could do when the company bid him welcome to the bathroom, was to turn on his heel and fly back to his room, to the consternation of the bathers and the entire staff of the inn. After that he was no longer treated as an illusion, but kept under close observation until he proved to be showing no sign of growing worse. There are inns, too, where, if one makes a call on a guest of

either sex, it is well to inquire the guest's occupation at the moment, lest one be conducted into his or her presence at an awkward moment. A people who have been disciplined to smile at sorrow and disaster as illusions naturally have little difficulty in thus regarding such trivialities as nudity and nature in general. A woman enters a room smiling at the company, pulls from her bosom a bottle full of ashes, holds it up to view and says 'There's my husband.' She has just returned from his funeral; he has become an illusion, if he was not one before, though more probably he proved a delusion if not a snare, and she was relieved to have him, for the first time, under her personal control. But in Japan the departed are not illusions to the extent that they appear to be in Europe; for the dead require the same care as the living, seeing that they are gods, and can take revenge on those who neglect them.

As the Japanese mind is inherently averse from abstract thought, most of the native humour is inspired by concrete incongruities and absurdities. There is a special fondness for the grotesque, due possibly to the rigid conventionality of feudal society when art alone had freedom to get even with environment by caricaturing it. Even when Japanese humour does rise above the merely concrete and depends on a purely intellectual concept, it often runs to points so recondite that

to us they are inappreciable. In the leading comic weekly of the metropolis a joke worth a whole page consisted of a sketch in black and white representing an old man and woman gazing at a row of flower pots standing upside down on a shelf in front of a florist's shop. The old woman asks the old man what those things are, with the holes in their tops. He puts a finger into the hole of a pot, turns it up and, looking into it, remarks that he cannot make out what they are, because they have a hole in the top and no bottom. During the war with Russia there was much talk in the press about the huge size of Russia as compared with Japan. A foreigner, addressing a Japanese audience, contended that results need not depend on the size of the countries at war. Right strategy was the vital thing. A bee could defeat a bulldog, or even an elephant, by settling on a strategic spot. The result of this illustration was not laughter, nor even smiles, but a general look of profound gravity. To compare Japan to a bee and her opponent to a bear might have been more apt, but the humour would have been no more obvious or appreciable to the audience.

Japanese humour often takes a gnostic form that has a lesson, or a sting in the tail; but only too frequently is it made to depend on a pun, for the people are inveterate punsters, a habit boresome to Occidentals. But with them, a

pun, like a proverb, is not intended so much to excite amusement as to command admiration: it is not a matter of fun so much as it is a matter of skill. With respect to the grotesque side of Japanese humour, there is frequently a degree of indelicacy that would not be tolerated in Occidental society, the implications being too Rabelaisian to pass the censor. There is, moreover, a fondness for the gruesome that takes various forms, some of which do not appeal to us. In one of the national museums may be seen, preserved in alcohol, the remains of a child still inside the stomach of the bear that devoured it, the tiny hands and feet quite recognizable. Whether the specimen is intended to amuse as well as interest the public, or merely to warn parents against exposing their children to bears, does not appear. But it is evident that the line to be drawn between what is permissible and what is not, in regard to humour, as well as in many other ways, does not exactly coincide with the same line in the Occident.

THE POET

EVERY Japanese is supposed to be a poet. Poetry, like morality, is natural to the children of the gods. Shinto teaches that the sons of Nippon should regard moral codes as superfluous: laws are for the lawless. All a true Japanese has to do in order to ensure right behaviour is to follow the dictates of his own nature: if he is governed by his instincts his life will be worthy. In the same way, and presumably in the same measure, he is inherently and naturally a poet. Poetry and morality are apparently in the same intuitive category. Both are essentially aesthetic. Poetry is an art; so is life, and so is conduct. 'Manners makyth man.' Deportment is morality; etiquette is ethics. Aesthetics are morals, and come natural to all Japanese.

The only important question raised by this series of rash statements is whether the theory they imply really works. What is the result of it in practice? Do the fruits commend either the poetry or the morality? It may seem futile to propound questions which there is no intention of attempting to answer. A probable answer, however, may be inoffensively suggested. Without

further pursuing the inquiry whether Japanese morality is moral, we may perhaps more legitimately proceed to ask whether Japanese poets produce poetry, a question slightly different from that which asks whether all Japanese are poets. There is, of course, only too often a distinction between poets and poetry, though not so often between versemakers and verse. The poets native to the children of the Japanese gods do not appear, in one sense, very different from those native to the children of other gods, in that very few versemakers among them can truthfully be regarded as poets. How indeed could it be otherwise where all are held to be poets, or at least given to verse composition? This need not preclude the admission that, poets or not, all Japanese attempt to write verse at some time during their earthly existence.

The most poetic moment in life to all Japanese is when they are very glad or very sad. Poetry is the refuge of extremity, a vent for pent-up emotion, a relief to mental stress or tension. Great national occasions, or other ecstatic moments in individual experience, call forth verse in plenty. But in Japan gladness is not generally so fruitful an inspiration to poets as sadness; which may take the form of poignant grief, or merely anger, or yet again only languor, or the approach of death, in Japan often premature. A favourite device, when temper gets out of hand, is to kneel down (in

Japan no one ever sits, not even poets), and devoutly let emotion evaporate in verse. As it is proverbial wisdom to think before speaking, especially in a fit of the tantrums, this may be an admirable form of relief, particularly for the object arousing the anger. As a vent for irascible emotion, however, it is more successful in a language where there are fewer and less effective swear-words than in our more copious Occidental vocabularies. A son of Erin would probably find prose always more 'cursive' than poetry, though none the less imagist. In most Occidental tongues those forced out of tempermental equilibrium find appropriate expletives in plenty. Japanese, on the contrary, are obliged to rely mainly on invidious comparisons, especially with the lower creation; and for this purpose poetry is most apt. There, images and similes abound. And if the poet be blamed for indulgence in inept images and unseemly similitudes he can always evade being accused of satirical motives on the plea of not being original; for almost every image, metaphor, simile, phrase or device employed by a Japanese poet has done duty previously in other connexions, near or remote. The national verse has its own peculiar history, tradition and vocabulary, to say nothing of a distinctive phraseology, most of which is well-worn and tested. Consequently a poet displays his inventive genius chiefly in discovering new applications for old

weapons; and thus verse can be always relied upon as a widely authenticated safety-valve for excessive emotional pressure.

Japan has both classical and common poets and poetry, though none but very clever and learned Occidental critics and *littérateurs* can distinguish between them with any degree of accuracy or certitude. Classical poetry pertains more to quality and theme than to time, for even modern poets can produce classical verse. The term thus refers for the most part to excellence of form and style no less than respect for tradition in theme, and command of the classical properties. Even the best poets cannot write poetically about anything and everything. They find it more difficult to apply the classical style to dogs and monkeys than to sun, moon and stars, or to blossoms and the seasons of the year. Since stars in native mythology have always been associated with demons they do not in the mind of the national poet occupy the same place of honour as the nearer luminaries which have always been regarded as benevolent deities. A classical poet must be instinct with classical themes, the very mention of which calls up to the average mind all that the poets have said on that subject, and which, therefore, at once inspires poetic sentiment or association.

And the classical mode is this: a verse of five lines consisting of five, seven, five, seven, seven

syllables each, respectively, or thirty-one syllables in all, one stanza comprising an entire poem. While a classical poem may not exceed these limits, it may shrink to a mode of lesser dimensions; for there is a diminutive form known as the *hokku* or *hakkai*, in three lines of five, seven, five, syllables each, or seventeen syllables in all; it is used chiefly for gnomic, comic or epigrammatic verse. The classical form is usually known as the *tanka* or *waka* metre. Beyond this exalted and exclusive mode there are forms represented by popular songs and other ditties, asserting greater freedom in theme and structure, such as the *dodoitsu* or *hauta*, often in four lines of seven, seven, seven, five syllables each, with little or no regard for classical diction.

The *waka* poetry is concerned mostly with love and death, or with the beauty of nature, especially spring blossoms and bird and animal life. Such poems adorn the pages of the great anthologies, like the *Manyoshu* and the *Kokinshu*, which have long remained models for all subsequent poetry. Nearly all Japanese poetry is dominated by a gentle melancholy, due to Buddhist influence. Gladness is ever shadowed by profound reserve. Nature's sombre moods and aspects make the main appeal. Nor is it possible for the Occidental mind to appreciate Japanese poetry in any adequate degree unless an effort is made to grasp the nation's conception of poetry. It is

obvious that brevity is one of its most essential qualities. A poem is a tiny opening through which the mind obtains a glimpse of the Eternal. It is a sparkle from the infinite and the illimitable. To the Japanese poet the difference between an Occidental poem and a Japanese poem is the difference between a statue and a cameo; or between York minster and the kohinoor diamond. Poetry is the most exquisite among literary jewels. A poem should give but the barest hint of the idea, or *motif*, inspiring it; the more facets it has the more brilliant will be the effect. The true poet leaves the reader to be his own poet. Only a mediocre poet will attempt to do the reader's thinking for him. The more poetic a reader is the more poetry will he find in real verse. It is, in fact, a poetry for poets; and this may be why all Japanese are said to be poets, for all, ostensibly at least, appreciate poetry. The poet has to afford his glimpse of the Eternal in the fewest possible words. One of the leading modern poets of Japan, Yoné Noguchi, contends that 'the most perfect poem is silence.' In this there is a hint that cuts both ways: there are only too many instances where silence would be better than what is written. Yet it is quite true that often the contrast between what the poet sees and what he is able to express in verse is so vast that he might well be discouraged from any expression of it at all. Such is the poetry we all feel but

never write. If we can find a poet able to echo our feelings in verbal music our happiness is, of course, much increased, for life is thus enriched. Consequently we can never be satisfied with silent poets, nor with silence for poetry. Neither can we call them poets who are unable to sing with sufficient sweetness to bring us in touch with the truth and beauty of reality. If silence in the presence of beauty be a sufficient credential to poetry, then all Japanese are easily poets, as well as many an Occidental.

A great Japanese poem is expected to be of more than diamond brilliance; it has to mirror and reflect not only the beauty that is without, but also the beauty that is from within; it must not only have facets enough to radiate pure light but, like radium, to emit an unreflected light that is inherently its own. All the greatest poems (and they are few) possess this characteristic radium sparkle. It is something that is felt rather than seen; something, too, that time cannot change. Obviously it is quite impossible to detect the full beauty of such a poem in any translation, however perfect, for in the process there is a transformation and even a transmutation during which the fragrance is apt to evaporate and the divine charm vanish.

The classical style may be illustrated by the following verse that well expresses the most

poignant moment, when death is about to separate two lovers :

Arazaran

Kono yo no hoka no

Omoide ni

Ima hito-tabi no

Au koto no gana.

After I am gone

Beyond this vale of pity,

I crave boon but one :

That somehow a way may be

Found to meet once more with thee.

In mediæval Japan exile was often the fate of the too clever or the too careless ; and the next poem suggests the feeling of such a lonely soul wandering in the mountains when he suddenly comes upon a young cherry tree in the glory of full bloom : in so friendless a world here at least is friendship :

Morotomi ni

Aware to omoe

Yamazakura

Ano yori hoka ni

Shiru hito mo nashi.

Let us be merry

In tender thought together,

Sweet mountain cherry :

Other than one another

No friend have we, my brother !

It is obvious that the wooing of the Japanese muse demands arts of coquetry and sentiment remote from Occidental tradition. To find oneself in a realm of literary aesthetics that know neither epic, dramatic nor narrative poetry, and where all themes have to be fitted into the meagre limit of thirty-one syllables, and sometimes into only seventeen, must seem to us more like a mode of discipline than a mode of poetry. Yet it might prove a very wholesome discipline to some of our more prolix verse-makers, if they turned more often from the art of the sculptor to that of the cameo carver. There is no reason why poetry should always be less idyllic than painting. The Japanese mode has one incomparable advantage over that of the Occidental poet: the poetry is read, not only in the age of its birth, but in after ages. There is no European poetry a thousand years old that is read at all to the same extent as such poetry is in Japan. The Occidental poet puts forth his verses which all too soon are shed like autumn leaves and blown away to oblivion, save for a few found pressed between the pages of forgotten books, but the Japanese poet writes, with the hope of being read forever.

And the degree of truth and beauty that can be squeezed into so tiny a lyric is often as admirable as it is wonderful. Wit and humour do not always go together, but if brevity be the soul of wit, it should be found in poetry more often

than in prose, and most of all in the poetry of Japan. Without conceding the principle that the zenith of elegance and excellence in poetry should be found at the vanishing point of the verse, it may well be admitted that the best poetry is what the poet conceives but never brings to birth. On the other hand, the contention that a truly poetic *motif* is so delicately divine and idyllic that it can only be indicated within the briefest possible compass of expression is worthy of some consideration.

Not infrequently the impact of Japanese verse on the Occidental mind is decidedly diverting; for the foreign translator, unless he has had the advantage of long education in the art, and the assistance of a competent scholarly native commentator, is apt, in tapping the mystery, to dissipate the charm. This is, perhaps, more often the case in regard to *hokku* verse. A European lady of some social distinction was a guest at one of the Tokyo Embassies. Of mature years, with a fresh countenance, and hair like newly-minted silver, the lady was sufficiently handsome and imposing to make a profound impression on high-class Japanese society, where she was regarded as a fine specimen of Occidental womanhood, especially as she was known to be the mother of a family as clever and as highly placed as herself. Now, it is a happy custom of polite society in Japan to speed the parting

guest with a farewell poem ; and this lady felt quite honoured, when about to set out for home, to receive such a poem from a prominent member of the social circle in which she had been moving during her sojourn in Japan. The lady, it should be remembered, was sailing for home by what is known as the Western route, by way of the Pacific and across Canada to Europe. Duly impressed by receipt of the poem, she was, of course, very anxious to know what it meant as literature. The poem was naturally in the approved classical metre and form, which only a scholar could hope to unravel for translation ; and being in the *hokku* mode, the mystery was all the more condensed. In it the princely author had apparently reached the acme of divine concretion ; the Parnassian fire was there, but no instrument could be found to express the temperature thereof in English. The radium required a magnifying glass to reveal the wonted sparkle, but this was not available. The most expert staff interpreters of the Embassy were called in for consultation ; they did their best, and handed to the lady the following translation :

‘ Westward
The old grey goose
Takes her way ! ’

To say that the recipient of this polite mark of

high favour was more embarrassed than disappointed at the translation is to express the situation but mildly. She was expected to show the poem to her friends; and they invariably wanted to know what it amounted to in their own tongue. But she had to content them by dilating on the imposing caligraphy of the original, which she intended to have framed to decorate the wall of her drawing-room, as an example of Japanese art. At last a Japanese scholar of poetic repute was appealed to for an explanation of the poem. Naturally he made the best of a difficult undertaking; he gave his anxious listeners to understand that in the national literature, particularly in poetry, the goose is regarded as one of the most moral and domesticated of God's good creatures; in fact the creator was especially pleased when he produced the goose; for the goose has only one husband and many children, and is, therefore, symbolic of all that is admirable in womanhood; she is especially docile even if often garrulous, but invariably the best of mothers, an ideal matron who stays by her young till they can take care of themselves. A poem capable of being expanded to such a volume of paraphrase without damage the lady had to regard as a marvel of comprehensiveness, though still somewhat beyond her own comprehension. She was at least appeased, if not wholly pleased.

It is this double-edged quality characteristic

of some Japanese poems, which renders them of more than passing interest to any literary mind on the scent for new points in poetry. To the foreign scholar who has familiarized himself with the classical poetry of Japan, such poetry is more easy of interpretation than the work of some of the lesser writers. Of course the tendency to verbal conceits and pivot words is not confined to Japanese verse. But the Japanese are more given to poetry as an intellectual game. A knowledge of Japan's literary history, as well as of Japanese literature, no less than of the racial psychology of the people, must be regarded as essential to any accurate interpretation of Japanese poetry. By a literary expert the author was once given the following poem as a good example of double-edged verse. It is only a popular song, and consequently without classical form :

UMEBOSHI

' Umeboshi da to iyute ;
 Baka ni shansu na !
 Mukashi wa hana yo !
 Uguisu nakaseta
 Koto no aru ! '

A PICKLED PLUM

' Only a pickled plum, you say ?
 But you despise without avail ;
 For I was once a blossom gay,
 And e'en made sing the nightingale ! '

In prose this poem appeared to me to mean: When you look at me, do not make a wry face, for I was once the beautiful plum blossom that made even the nightingale sing. But the expert insisted that that was not the real meaning of the song. I had seen only the light reflected from the facets of the gem, but not the radium sparkle in it. By so literal a translation I had allowed the poetic flavour to dissipate. The inner significance of the verse, he said, was this: When you see a haggard old woman hobbling down the street, do not avert your face, for she was once a beautiful girl who inspired young men to sing songs in her praise. When it is remembered that such a song as this is often heard on the *geisha's* lips, its significance is all the more apparent, for the *geisha's* greatest dread is lest, when her beauty has faded, she may come to beggary, a common sight in the streets.

The pickled plum, it may be explained, is a sort of appetizer which the maid, who comes in to open the shutters of your room in the morning, leaves at your bedside at a native inn; it takes the place of the English cup of morning tea, though this conception of it requires an imagination of more than ordinary versatility. The taste of a pickled plum makes the mouth water like a dose of quinine, and there is no further comfort until the taster gets some breakfast. These Japanese substitutes for cocktails do their

work as effectively as the real thing, without danger of injury. Once you have tasted a pickled plum there is no possibility of ever looking it again in the face without longing for something to eat; even the mention of it is sufficient for most foreigners. If no food be available the only hope is to avert one's face and pass on. The humour of the song is partly due to the fact that no degree of mental concentration on the blossom that the plum came from could possibly make one take more kindly to the bitterness of the pickled variety. Yet the thought has obviously some poetic possibilities, even if the plum be human. Nature's intentions are possibly kind, but yet afford problems even to poets. Was the blossom, or the plum, or the pickled plum, the final consummation of nature's plan and purpose; and is shrunken and neglected old age the ultimate achievement of fair girlhood? Evil derives from man's perversion of nature to ignoble ends. Consequently the thought born of this little song extends beyond the realm of time and sense. It has an ethical quality that is of the art that applies to all time. Sung by a pretty girl, this song makes as profound an appeal as the most exquisite of European songs.

Japan has a great number of these songs, known as *dodoitsu*, reflecting the sentiment and feeling of the more humble folk above whose intellect the more classical verse soars too far.

Each of these brief verses gives forth a flash of keen emotion, illuminating life's joy or sorrow, hope or despair, especially the uncertainties of love and the fickleness of the human heart. The *geisha* always sings such songs best ; and she is always ready to please her guests with a ditty appropriate to the occasion. Charged, as this type of song is, with some degree of humour, pathos and wit, the *dodoitsu* reveals a human heart that is much the same in all lands. In the following song is expressed the mood of a maiden waiting for her lover, and disappointed because she mistakes for his footfall that of a stranger :

‘ Kuru ka, kurua ka to
Matasete oite :
Doko ye soreta ka
Natsu no ame ? ’

‘ Is he coming, yes coming,
The lover I’m awaiting ?
O where has he turned, aside
Like the summer rain ? ’

In the next is pictured two lovers lamenting the shortness of the night spent together ; as in *Romeo and Juliet*, the dawn has come all too soon ; and the Japanese Juliet sings :

‘Yo no akenu
Kumi ga aru nara
Futari se sunde
Tsumoru ga shite mitai.’

‘If there be daybreakless land,
There will we dwell together,
And for ever, hand in hand,
Love one another !’

THE WIFE

THE Japanese woman, as a rule, is a delightful person, of sweet, refined and docile disposition, inured to adversity and consequently a marvel of patience and perseverance. Hers is a temperament, however, more adapted to the environment that created her than to the more active and sportive Occident. Her husband is her lord and master ; her duty is primarily to him and then to her home and children. In old Japan she was, of course, his property to do with as he pleased ; but, with the development of a more modern and humane civilization, this cruel inequality has greatly lessened, until lordly man is beginning to accord woman her rightful place beside him in the home and in society, if not also in business. But the Japanese woman's duty is still mainly to her husband and family. The purpose of her life is to be a good wife and mother : to bear and care for children, to look strictly to her husband's interests, to cook the household meals, to make the clothes and keep them mended.

It is obvious that in Japan a woman's responsibilities are more comprehensive in character than in Occidental society where she

has acquired greater liberty to choose her accomplishments and even her duties. The position of the Japanese woman, as wife and mother, must involve not only domestic and conjugal duties of an onerous nature, but also most of the graces with which men are wont to endow or idealize woman in all lands. From childhood to the age for marriage efficiency in housekeeping is instilled into her mind, no less than skill in the management of men. Hers is the art of moral *jujitsu* by which she overcomes not by resistance but by acquiescence. She becomes the most expert of lion-tamers, not by force or by fear, but by feminine grace and charm. In dealing with men she possesses, in an incomparable degree, the art of suasion. Proper training for wifehood is part of the national system of female education. Woman starts out in life under the firm conviction that her future weal and happiness depend almost wholly on her ability to please her husband. If she can look to herself, to her husband, to her children, and to her house in a manner satisfactory to her lord, all will be well, though she may ruin her health in the effort. One does not wonder at seeing so many Japanese women quite worn out in such a task. To keep the household affairs running satisfactorily, often on inadequate means, is likely to prove a soul-sapping job for a delicate wife. If she steals her husband's purse to please him, by evading failure, the public

will condone it, and even the husband may be silenced.

As the wife is chosen, not by the man she marries, but by his parents and family relatives, often a large company, there is no possibility of love before the nuptial knot is tied ; and the abnormal percentage of divorces to marriages in Japanese society indicates an unhappy degree of failure to find love after marriage. The unemotional and businesslike manner in which betrothals are arranged is equalled only by the ease with which marriage is annulled ; which, in turn, tends to carelessness or undue haste in selection of life partners. Not infrequently the match is negotiated merely for financial or family reasons, without regard to compatibility of temperament or even the probability of mutual affection. The sequel is, that if one of the unhappy pair falls in love, after wedlock, with a third party, there is nothing for it but divorce on the man's part, or suicide for the woman, if there be no home to which she can return. Under the new laws a woman may obtain a divorce, but, as a matter of fact, she seldom if ever does so, for no judge could be expected to give a woman a verdict against a man, especially when he is her own husband. Consequently, so far, nearly all divorces are obtained by men only.

Nearly all Japanese acquiesce in the very general conviction that most men get the sort of

wives they deserve. This is certainly not true of women, as regards husbands, since, in Japan women are angels compared with the men of the country. Yet women can be as hard and difficult in Japan as anywhere. The hardest woman is usually the mother-in-law, who is proverbially cruel. Judging by hearsay, the kind mother-in-law is the exception rather than the rule. The young wife has to enter the house of her husband's mother, to which he succeeds as head of the family ; and if the mother has had a hard life herself, it does not induce her to have greater mercy on the young daughter-in-law, but rather the reverse, in revenge on mankind for what she herself had to suffer in the same position. The wife is treated rather as an apprentice or neophyte, for which there seems to be a universal lack of sympathy.

In Japan, no less than in the rest of the Orient, there is a traditional disposition to regard woman as the source of most evils in domestic and social life. She is a direct descendant of Eve, and believed to live up to her maternal origin. If there is any trouble a woman, they say, will be found at the bottom of it. In guest rooms, no doubt as a warning to wives, one sees the walls decorated with such mottoes as this : ' A woman's tongue three inches long can kill a man six feet tall.' It is quite true that in Japan, no less than in Occidental countries, a woman can do

much to ruin herself and her husband and family. But in Japan, too, as well as elsewhere, nature has bearded man and given dimples to woman ; and even in the darkest hour it is woman, rather than man, that society has to depend upon for the smiles of the more optimistic view, and the more excellent way out. Hence the universal conviction that a doe should have no horns, another suitable inscription for domestic apartments. It is assuredly the case that most Japanese husbands prefer a cheerful face to even a clean one or a decorated one, though most of them get all three. To the foreigner it seems a pity that so many Japanese women are addicted to the fashion of covering their pretty peach-bloom cheeks with a white powder that transforms them into icy-looking porcelain dolls. How this can be tolerated as artistic and becoming is perhaps as great a mystery as the supposed comeliness of bobbed hair in Europe. The Japanese woman's magnificent wealth of purple black hair she has still too much aesthetic sensibility to abandon for more mannish modes ; and, as her hair is more glorious than any artificial head-dress, her husband has no millinery bills to pay. Only widows wear bobbed hair, for a woman should do penance for the loss of her lord. No woman, apparently, has a right to lose her husband. There seems to be a traditional suspicion that a woman is in some mysterious way the cause of her widowhood.

Knowing that she must be deprived of her beautiful tresses if she loses her husband, he is supposed to receive all the greater care as a precaution against decease. And a woman's hair requires almost as much care as her husband ; it takes much doing up, and she cannot do it up herself but has to call in the hairdresser who, however, is always at her disposal for a penny. Once it is done up it is a thing of beauty and a joy, not for ever, but for at least a week or ten days, when it will need to be attended to again. To prevent its becoming dishevelled during her housework, she puts a napkin about it, and at night she sleeps on a stool-like head-rest that does not molest her coiffure. The wife's dress is always so beautiful, and so beautifully correct, that it does much to compensate for the artificial disfigurement of her complexion with ghostly tints ; and as the fashion of her dress seldom changes she is not obliged to ask her husband for replenishment of her wardrobe as often as the Occidental wife.

The Japanese wife's most distinctive virtues, however, are always those that pertain more especially to domestic environment. She is the creator and preserver of the home, where most of her life is spent, for the husband is for the most part absent. In establishing her status in the community the paramount question is what she has been to her husband, children and household. The women with an ambition to amuse themselves,

or to entertain the public, or to cut a prominent figure in society, do not accept family responsibilities, but belong to a gay and doubtful class. In Japan they say that a good wife is like a snail : she never leaves her house, for when she goes out she takes it with her. Here, however, the man is frequently too thoughtlessly narrow and even selfish, for he does not allow his wife to have the pleasure of going out to the theatre or kinema as often as he should. This form of male egotism is happily on the decline in recent years. Yet in a newspaper inquiry conducted some time ago, exploring the faults of husbands, the one desire expressed by the majority of women who wrote to the editor was that they might find husbands who would consent to their being allowed out to entertainments occasionally.

The wife does not attain unto the height of her ambition until she has borne her husband a son. Failing this happiness, she must consent to the adoption of an heir to succeed to the headship of the family, or else allow a son to be begotten independently of her. On the mother, rather than on the father, does the son depend for the national spirit (Yamato Damashii) that is to inspire his life and conduct as a loyal son of Nippon always ready to die for emperor and country. If the average Japanese wife were asked whether she would prefer to have been the wife of the prime minister to being

the mother of a soldier, she would promptly say *No!* The happiest moments of her life are when she smiles at the birth of a son, smiles, too, to see him go to fight for his country, smiles at last to receive his ashes to be laid in the family tomb and be worshipped for ever as divine. And with all this oppressive devotion to family and house, she must never forget that her lord comes first. There is an old saying among the Japanese that to have an unsympathetic wife is like going out with a blind companion to see the moon. It is freely admitted everywhere that a man's success depends on his wife as much as on himself, though there is not the same readiness to admit the extent that a woman's success depends on her husband. In a leading newspaper recently the first prize for the best aphorism on ideal womanhood was awarded to this: 'A good wife lays the foundation of a bronze statue.'

To the foreigner, a very impressive aspect of the Japanese woman's life is the way she has to work. The Japanese woman is perhaps the greatest worker in the world. Hers is the largest share of the most toilsome labour. Of course the Occidental woman works too; she tires herself out on the tennis courts, the golf links or the hunting field, if not on the dancing floor; but in Nippon all woman's work is productive: it helps to support the family or provide for the nation. There is no room for waste of energy,

no carrying of coals to Newcastle. The Japanese woman does all the labour that Occidental women do, but a great deal more. Thousands and tens of thousands of wives, mothers and daughters toil daily from ten to fifteen hours in fields, factories, mines and shops, an appalling percentage of them being eliminated annually by disease or death, brought on by over-exertion under insanitary conditions, to say nothing of ill-feeding. Many have nothing more physically sustaining than a little rice three times a day, flavoured with a bit of dried fish and pickles. For the amelioration of these cruel conditions, woman too is the prime mover and the most energetic worker. But the spirit of industry is still pagan : it exploits the weak in the interests of the strong without mercy. Large numbers of women must work no matter what the conditions, as the only alternative to death from starvation. Woman's work, like her wedded life, is outside her own choice : she has to take it, as she takes death, when it comes. Her happiest days are those of innocent childhood playing with her companions in the old temple courts, as yet ignorant of life. After marriage, unless very fortunate, her smile is apt to grow metallic and conventional until her beauty only too soon fades into haggard old womanhood.

On woman's life the influence of Occidental civilization, and especially the Christian religion,

is having a favourable effect. Every year more and more men and women are seeking and obtaining the freedom of modern society in regard to courtship and marriage; they are choosing their own life-partners, and even deciding their own betrothals. This is chiefly under Christian auspices, but the influence of the Church is much wider than its own borders, in Japan as elsewhere. But ancient traditions and customs are too sacred to be let die in a decade. It will take time to admit that woman belongs to a superior creation, even under the impetus of a foreign religion. Prejudice and sin have vested interests which rigidly oppose the moral and physical emancipation of woman. There are more than fifty thousand women still in slavery to brothel-keepers and their patrons. The conflict of interests is intense, and strongly influences politics. The reaction against unreasoning convention imposed on womanhood sometimes leads to doubtful results. Violently breaking away from cruel custom, some women are foolishly driven to the opposite extreme, claiming the right to free love, temporary or conditional marriage, and even the freedom to frequent at night the gay quarters of the suburbs, as the men do. Here at least men do not admit that women are entitled to equal rights. Happily these freaks are not likely to become typical of the changes now going on in Japanese society; they suggest but the moral aberration of the few,

as against the general moral sanity of Japanese womanhood; and even these few are possibly led astray in the effort to emulate Magda in Sundermann's *Hiemat*; which the police censored almost beyond recognition when it was put on the Japanese stage. Though the new and rightful freedom for women, so long overdue in Japan, may be delayed by the indiscretions of the few, there is no doubt that it is in sight and will soon have arrived.

THE EARTHQUAKE

ONE of the most disconcerting aspects of life in Japan is the persistence of earthquakes, which are almost as common as rain is in England, and the inhabitants pay just about as little attention to them. The death of a few persons, as the result of a seismic upheaval, affects the equanimity of the public no more than does a charabanc accident in Europe. There is a picture of it in the newspapers the next day, which everybody views with grim concern ; but, just as no one rides any the less in a charabanc or a train after an accident, so no one is any the more afraid to go on living in a Japanese city simply because an earthquake there has killed a few people.

When I arrived in Japan one of the first questions put to me was :

‘ How do you think you will like the earthquakes ? ’

The inquiry came as a shock to me, for I had never given any attention to the matter of earthquakes in Japan, though I was aware of the possibility of them. But I had always supposed that, even in countries liable to earthquakes, they were few and far between, and mostly harmless. Consequently, I ejaculated :

‘Earthquakes ? Do you have many ?’

‘O yes,’ they said ; ‘we have quite a number ; sometimes five or six a day ; sometimes nine or ten, or even more ; they vary a good deal in number and frequency, as well as in character. But the average for the last thirty years, as recorded by seismometers in various places, has been 1,463 annually for Tokyo, or about four a day ; while the average for the whole empire is about 5,000 earthquakes a year.’

‘Well,’ said I, ‘I don’t think I shall have any fancy for earthquakes. What do you do when an earthquake comes ?’

‘What do you do ?’ they exclaimed. ‘Why, *you* do nothing : the earthquake does it all.’

‘Yes, I do not doubt that ; but, after so much experience, surely you have some advice to give a stranger.’

‘No,’ they said, ‘there is not much advice to give about earthquakes. Of course you know an earthquake comes with a kick, like this ?’ And here the speaker struck one of his fists upwards with the other.

‘No,’ I said, ‘I do not know that.’

‘Well, it does,’ he insisted ; ‘and when you feel a kick that sends you an inch or two off your feet, or above your chair, remember that that may be the beginning of an earthquake ; but never be too sure about it, for the country has a habit of kicking, owing to settlements and tremors

from former earthquakes ; so we always wait for a second kick before taking action ; for, if it be a real earthquake, one that means business, there will certainly come a second kick ; and if the second kick is worse than the first, we get out, if we are inside, and move away from all standing structures, if we are outside. But if the second kick proves less severe than the first, we try a third, because the 'quake may be subsiding ; and, if so, it will not be necessary to waste time and energy by running out. In fact, if you run out every time you feel the earth moving in Japan, you will be half your time engaged in escaping from nothing. And if a lamp should be burning, be sure you take it out with you when you go. If a lamp began to dance, and overset, it would do more damage than an earthquake any time.'

' And do many people get killed ? '

' Yes, some, but not many ; that is, nothing to worry about. If you do not get killed, there is nothing to worry about ; and if you do, there is less.'

I began to realize that it would take me some considerable time to become reconciled to my environment. Not very long after the above conversation, however, I was seated one night at a table, reading a newspaper, when suddenly I received a kick that sent me above my chair, I do not know how far, but certainly far enough for any one to have pulled a cushion from under me.

I was shot above the chair, the chair was shot above the floor, the floor and the house itself were shot above the earth ; the earth itself felt like a football tapped by a very hard toe ; in fact everything between me and all below me seemed to have kicked or had a very sharp spasm. I did not wait for any second kick ; one such mysterious impact was quite enough for me, so I jumped from the chair, seized the lamp and started for the door. I was in the dormitory department of a large college ; when I got out of the room I was not yet outside, but only in a long corridor ; and so bewildered was I by the kick and the hasty start, that I did not know, for a second, which way to turn to gain the place of exit ; but, seeing a lamp at the further end of the corridor, I instinctively made towards it as fast as I could trot, holding my lamp out safely before me ; when, to my utter amazement, I saw that the other lamp was advancing rapidly towards me. The two lamps met. I gazed at him and he gazed at me, both holding our lamps at arms length, and facing each other in solemn silence. As a fellow countryman of mine once said, ‘ I thought it was him and he thought it was me, but it was nayther of us.’ In this case it proved to be a high dignitary of the Church who, I did not until then know, was in the building ; and I was as much surprised at meeting him there as I was at the earthquake itself. All we could do now was to bow, and part

for the night, under the humiliation of having not been able to wait for the second kick, and so had our run for nothing. But it is most difficult to muster enough courage to try a second kick, when you have felt the first one for the first time.

In all the thousands of earthquakes experienced during the many years of my residence in Japan, my experience has been, that the worst time for an earthquake is in the middle of a cold winter night, when you are all tucked up snugly in your English blankets on an English spring-bottom mattress. You know nothing until suddenly and forcibly awakened, only to find yourself bobbing up and down, and do not know whether it is the first kick or the forty-first. Whether to get up is the question. There is no experience so humiliating and disappointing as to scramble out of bed on a cold winter night only to discover that, after you have got enough clothes about you to get out, the earth's activity had subsided long before you were even ready to go out, and so all the fuss was for nothing. But it is rather a serious matter if one has a family, for then one cannot simply abandon the ship and leave her to her fate. One has to rush from room to room awaking all, and picking a baby or two under each arm, and thus get all the passengers and crew out before leaving the ship. By that time, however, in a severe shock, the house might have collapsed and buried its occupants. But as I am alive to tell the tale,

after a very long experience, it proves that the millions escape and only the few suffer. Deaths from seismic disaster are comparatively rare, as against death from epidemics and travelling accidents. As a rule motor cars in London kill more people every year than earthquakes do in Japan in ten years ; but it has to be admitted that when a very destructive upheaval comes, such as the great disaster in 1923 in Tokyo, it can easily make up for lost time.

The cataclysmic upheaval of 1923 was, of course, unprecedented in the degree of both horizontal and perpendicular motion, and in the number of casualties, which amounted to over 156,000, including about 100,000 deaths ; but most of the fatalities were due, not to the 1,600 severe shocks of earthquake in twenty-four hours, but to the ensuing conflagration. Tokyo and Yokohama, where the destruction of life and property was greatest, represented populations of nearly three million and half a million respectively, spread out over a vast space, living in thousands of little wooden houses with paper doors and windows and floors of straw matting (*tatami*). The few houses that collapsed fell on their internal fires, were at once ablaze, and soon set the entire city on fire. In a short time thousands of victims were completely surrounded by circles of flame, with no possibility of escape ; and so hopelessly perished. In an ordinary earthquake fires are promptly

extinguished by the fire brigade ; but in this case the severity of the upheaval broke the water-mains, leaving the authorities helpless. All that could be done was to make fire-breaks by pulling down houses but so rapidly did the flames spread, under a high wind, that it was not possible to save many lives in this way. The conviction is that the worst earthquake in Asia is not likely to occur again in Japan. The experience of the nation during the last two thousand years has been that every citizen is liable to experience one very destructive earthquake during a lifetime ; and if he survives that, he may hope to die a natural death when his time comes.

THE GAME

ALMOST every civilized country has evolved some game that may be termed national; among many forms of diversion or recreation there is at least one that finds more devotees than any other, and which, when a big match is on, excites more universal interest and enthusiasm than other forms of sport. In this sense the great national game of Japan is *sumo*, or wrestling. It is not much like wrestling in the Occidental manner, however, and is, therefore, all the more interesting to foreigners. What baseball is to the United States, and cricket or football to England, *sumo* is to Japan. All classes are devoted to the practice of it, and to witnessing the national *sumo* contests. Tournaments of national importance take place semi-annually, in January and May, in the colossal wrestling amphitheatre in Tokyo, where as many as 13,000 people will crowd together day and night until the ten days of excitement end in proving who, among the wrestlers, is to be declared champion for the season.

The Japanese claim that *sumo* is their oldest game, no less than their greatest, contests of it being recorded as far back as the year twenty-three

B.C. Thus for so many centuries it has maintained its popularity, and is scarcely less honoured now than at any time in the past. Not only in the capital, but in Osaka also, are the national headquarters for the most popular *sumo* tournaments. There are some 200 professional wrestlers, and many thousands of amateurs, for every Japanese from boyhood onwards has tried his strength at it. At each tournament the contestants, for convenience, are divided into two opposing camps, known as the Eastern and Western, ten wrestlers on each side, each of whom has one bout with an opponent each day of the ten days' contest. The whole thing is organized and maintained by a national association of retired wrestlers. A very large sum of money passes through their hands annually, for the sale of tickets is immense. In Japan it is the custom for professionals to allow others to make money out of them, until they reach a degree of fame or age that enables them to retire and make a living out of other professionals in turn. When a wrestler has won a championship in any season he is entitled to retire and live on the takings of the fraternity still struggling towards ascendancy. The regular income of a wrestler is inconsiderable, for he does not usually expect more than £3 or £4 for a match, but his perquisites from tips are often valuable, according to his popularity.

The imperial family of Japan takes no less

interest in the game than the common people, though none of its members attend the public contests. The Emperor and other members of the imperial House have frequent opportunities of witnessing the game, however, for when distinguished hosts entertain their equals or superiors a wrestling booth is usually included in the programme of amusements supplied. On such occasions only champion wrestlers, as a rule, are invited to participate, and do their best to impress their high-class spectators. There are no more enthusiastic supporters of the game than the various ranks of the imperial army and navy. Of course the *sumo* tournaments always command a large following of bookmakers and their patrons too.

The booth where the wrestling bouts take place is a circle about ten feet in diameter, under a roof set on four pillars, thatched like a shrine. The circle is filled with soft sand ; and near each pillar is a small heap of salt from which each wrestler takes a pinch for good luck as he advances in a leap against his opponent. The wrestlers are huge fellows of enormous muscular development, weighing from fifteen to twenty stone, and possessed of 'corporations' large enough to keep them well apart in the struggle. After entering the ring, they bow to each other and squat down like two frogs, facing each other with a look of calm defiance, blinking their eyes ominously, often pretending to spring at each other ; and after thus feigning

attack for a few moments, they pick up a pinch of salt, throw it away, and then leap at each other like flash, each seizing the other's belt, if possible, the hands on either side aiming to get well around the bulky body and gain a firm hold of the belt. The wrestler does not try to throw his opponent, but to lift or push him out of the ring. This he attempts to achieve by gripping his belt behind and lifting him against his own front and then wheeling him round, as on a pivot, and dropping him outside the ring. Failing in this, he attempts to squeeze him, bear-fashion, until he is winded, and then pushes him back with his strong arms, or by butting him over the heart with his head and driving beyond the ring breathless. More frequently, however, with his great abdomen as a fulcrum, the man of superior strength lifts his opponent bodily and sets him down outside the ring, as though it were the easiest thing in the world.

The best wrestlers are said to have at their command as many as two hundred tricks by means of which an opponent may be discomfited. Generally speaking, however, there are admitted to be at least thirty-eight well-known tricks based on what is called the 'fundamental hand'; the latter involves such principles as throwing back, twisting or entangling the legs and feet, and simply lifting bodily. After witnessing several bouts of wrestling, the game becomes monotonous to the Occidental, even more monotonous than a

prolonged cricket match. The first few bouts once over, the process seems so silent and so sure that the spectators are inclined to lose zest, but the element of insouciance is felt far more by the foreigner than by the Japanese crowd. How thousands of every degree and class are able to watch this sort of game with sustained interest for many days is a puzzle to those foreigners unable to endure more than two or three hours of it. Of course everything possible is done to boost the game by interested parties: especially the bookmakers and journalists, the Tom Websters of the nation being employed to create the most novel wrestling contortions in black and white, for everyone wants to know the secrets of the champion's triumph, as well as the special features of the skill he defeated. The Japanese affirm that the sport is favoured as a manly game that promotes physical excellence without brutality. It is less savage, if also less exciting, than boxing, in which but little interest is shown. Yet the wrestler can hardly be regarded as a type of physical perfection, because only born giants can become effective candidates for the *sumo* ring, and their physical development renders them unfit for any other occupation.

The next greatest game to *sumo* is known as *judo*, or *jujitsu*, and is also a contest that stands for victory without blood. It is a form of gymnastics that results in a more rational development of

physique than *sumo*, and demands intelligence more than mere physical or muscular strength. *Judo* is an art of self-defence that seeks victory through the self-surrender of the person attacked. The enemy is overcome by yielding to him. It is based on the principle that if you give an enemy rope enough he will hang himself. To begin with, it is always a shock and a discouragement to an aggressor to meet with no resistance. *Judo* is a method of meeting attack by causing the aggressor a loss of equilibrium. The logic of the method is that it is futile to oppose lesser to greater strength ; the lesser can hope to win only by giving way to the greater until the greater overbalances and becomes the weaker, while the weaker is thus left no less strong than before. The same principle is adopted by tennis players who seek to tire their opponents rather than to score, at first ; and then with exhaustion comes defeat. In *judo*, even if one *is* the stronger to begin with, it is nevertheless better to allow one's opponent to do as much pushing and struggling as possible, and thus reduce his strength, since economy of energy is one of the first principles of the art.

In the same way, when an opponent attempts to throw you by lifting or tripping, it is best to throw yourself down, pulling the aggressor with you, and then place him under restraint. Similar principles are utilized when one is seized by the

arm or wrist or around the waist ; but in such cases the principle of non-resistance may not always work. In which case one must use the part seized in such a manner as to counteract the grip till it gives way. The main point is that strength properly applied can always control strength greater than itself. When you are seized by an opponent there is a vital moment when he moves his body forward or backward, when, if you use your strength aright, he will fall. There is also the principle of choking that may be effectively utilized ; and, in addition, the principle of disabling him by getting control of his arm in such a manner as to incapacitate him for action. For instance, if he attempts to strike, seize him by the arm, especially the elbow, and pull him forward as he comes at you, till he over-balances, when you can take him by the neck and choke him.

In the general practice of *judo* as an art of physical culture, there is a great variety of movement to acquire, in order to gain full control over one's own body, as well as over that of an opponent. Indeed mental training is one of the most important aspects of the art. *Judo* trains the mind for promptitude of decision and action, as well as how to discern quickly and accurately the strong and weak points in an opponent. What to do, and when and how to do it, are vital. As there is equal ignorance on both sides one has

to be prepared for, and never be surprised at, the most unexpected developments. The alertness that is ready for every emergency, mental or physical, is a fine art that can be acquired only by strict training. Mental confusion means physical confusion, and disaster. In *judo* all one's reason and imagination are constantly called into play. One learns the difference between victory by suasion and victory by coercion ; the former is the more permanent. One learns, too, to let excitement and fury do their part in vanquishing an opponent, while one keeps oneself calm and husbands one's strength. *Judo* teaches each to make the best of himself, and to blame no one else for his condition or position. Such is the Japanese theory of *judo*.

In recent years games from abroad have been introduced into Japan, and, among the ordinary folk, especially youth, the new games are fast supplanting the old. The most universally popular of the imported games is American baseball, which is now a national sport, well organized after the American fashion ; and matches between universities, noted clubs, and famous American teams, draw tens of thousands to witness them, paying gate admissions to keep up the clubs and pay the professionals. This game is played in all national and other schools of any importance, and bids fair to rival wrestling as a national sport, because it appeals universally to the Japanese love

of military strategy and physical skill. A baseball game is more like a real battle than either *sumo*, *judo* cricket or football, though the latter is now played, especially rugby, by most of the schools and universities. Tennis and golf are increasingly popular too, producing experts with no small exhibition of skill and achievement. All these relaxations and recreations are having a marked influence on the entire civilization of Japan, for, in the past, sport was mainly an indoor affair, the effect of which was not always moral

THE SIGN

THE signs that meet the eye along almost every street in the larger towns of Japan, are clearly signs of the times no less than of the shops they advertise, for they suggest not only a persistent desire to deal in English goods but also, for that purpose, to command a knowledge of the English language. And yet most of the customers of these shops can hardly be expected either to speak or to understand that language. At all events it is obvious that, if the stock-in-trade represents genuine imports, the language in which it is announced is distinctly home made. This Japanese English is about as near the real thing as the architecture of the shop fronts is akin to their supposed models in Regent Street.

The less ambitious commercial establishments, retailing goods under native signboards, are more in harmony with their environment, as well as in better taste, than the more pretentious Anglicized shops and their signs. Placed horizontally, or depending perpendicularly over the pavements, the native signs are at least artistically decorated with cryptic ideographs, resembling, to the foreign eye, nothing so much as innumerable earthworms in writhing endless conflict ; but the

signs in alleged English are daubed in chaotic colouring and lettering, often with capitals, small letters and script indiscriminately in the same word or phrase, suggestive of even a more inebriate origin or impulse than the native lettering in tangled vermicelli.

While some of the signs in Japanese English are amazingly simple and even obvious, other assuredly require a commentary, so obscure is their intention, a motive or fashion more recently finding favour in England where some of the posters that enliven the landscape are not always obvious in meaning, especially to a stranger. It is improbable that any Japanese pill-maker would think it worth while to announce to passengers in trains that they were just forty miles from the metropolis. Some Japanese signs are even more enigmatic. When the eye is arrested by such a legend as this over a shop, *Ladies furnished in the upper story*, it may not be so readily inferred that the tailor doing business beneath intends only to signify that he makes women's blouses; while the allegation that *Ladies have fits in the upper story* implies nothing more serious than that the tailor's fitting room for ladies is upstairs. This tailor, more discerning than his rivals, discovered that foreign ladies do not care to have their new dresses fitted in the presence of the shop-hands, and so he considerably provided a room over his shop for this purpose. A tailor who announced, *Here ladies*

have coats made from their own skins, was only affirming that he made fur coats for women, but they had to bring the fur with them to be made up, as he did not deal in skins. Another knight of the needle assumed the distinction, *Gold Tail*, because he made a speciality of furnishing naval and military uniforms, and dress for diplomatic officials, who require distinctive dress for State functions, usually trimmed with gold lace. And the *Ladies Outfitter, the Ribbons, the Laces, the Veils, the Feelings*, across the street, was only claiming facilities for furnishing the wives and daughters of such officials, so that they might be appropriately costumed to accompany their fathers or husbands on State occasions. Ordinary folk aiming to gain admission to society could be properly fitted out by a neighbouring tailor who furnished, *European Monkey Jacket Make for Japanese*.

Europeans preferring their own to native food are invited to patronize the *Biscuits Making and Selling House*, where they will find *Cake and Infections for Sale*, as well as *European Food of Nutriment*. A dairy adjacent will supply *Fulish Milk and Criam*, the milk being tested, according to a hand bill presented to the customer, to guarantee three grades: first class, no water; second class, ten per cent water; third class, twenty per cent water. 'Now, I hope you put good water in the milk,' said a simple foreign

missionary lady to the boy who delivered the milk. 'Yes,' he assured her, 'we put the very best water we can get.' What could be more frank and satisfactory! A milk cart seen passing along the street was labelled, *The Best Mill*, a more candid confession of sources, or resources, than most dairies conceded. The Japanese prefer tea to milk; and foreigners of this palate are invited to the shop which assures them that *The Tas are Restful and For Sharpen the Minds*; and, if given to 'soft' drinks, the tourist may be accommodated at the shop that sells *Ramune Soda*, *Sasupre*, *Zinzibiya*, *Jinjiuyael*, and *Gunwater*, the latter a general term for effervescing beverages. Thus prohibitionists may be served with drinks, but prohibition as a policy or a practice finds no support in Nippon; at least there is no sign of it, for alcoholic drinks of all kinds are sold by all grocers the same as food. One of the most respectable of restaurants attracts customers by so simple a device as *A Grog Shop*. *A Pot House*. And the only begetter of one of the country's most popular drinks simply states the fact over his door: *Bottled By Pale Ale & Co*. Those who care for something more substantial may betake themselves to the diehard shop yonder where they may have *Irish Stewed*, *à la carte*. Something supposedly still more durable is available at *Ye olde Hors Bif Shop*, where animal fanciers help to dispose of retired ponies. The *Mountain*

whale For Sale establishment deals in wild boar meat, the sign enabling Buddhists, and others conscientiously averse to animal flesh, to indulge in the same under another name. Further down the street a little old man is seen kneeling before a basket, and holding up something in his two palms between his eye and the sun ; if you are in doubt as to the sanity or purpose of this performance, just regard the sign over the shop, which reads, *Extract of Fowl*. A time-table announces the hours of departure for the *Stem-boots* ; and to make sure that your watch will not cause you to miss the steamer, you should provide yourself with a watch from the shop with this sign : *Time Piece Shop To Sell the Insurable Watch*. Before embarking on what may be a tedious voyage, smokers may provide for their needs from the *Long-cut Toback Cigaretter*, who assures his patrons that *Of Smokes Our Tobak Is Pressure to the Tongue and Give Healthiness to Hers and Hes*. Those illiterate, or incapable of adequate self-expression at times, may go to the man engaged in *Writing for Another*. *Headh Store* is not a dealer in scalps, but merely desires the passer-by to realize the important fact that there stands the head office of a great commercial establishment. *Yodas a Dealer in Tubs* is delightfully self-explanatory. *A Curious Shop*. *Nito the Small* means that that Curio shop is kept by Nito, junior. *The Butterfly and Worm Merchant* is nothing worse than a

naturalist. His patronage is problematical. The increasing prevalence of the motor-car doubtless menaces the future of *The Carriage and All, of Harness and the Harnessmaker*; the source of his leather supply carries on business quite near as *To Trade Hair-skin Sort Shop*. And *Imstracted by the French Horse-Leech* is over a veterinary surgeon's office to inform the public that he was educated in France, but *how* remains an enigma.

In Japan the barber is always a busy man, though he is quite as often a woman; all males wear the hair closely cropped like convicts, and so everyone has to go to the barber at least once a week. When clippers first came into use the barber in possession of a pair had a great advantage over his rival still clipping heads with scissors; and consequently he placed over his shop: *Barber. Nair Sneos*, which, with proper orthography, would be Barber. Hair Shears. Another had over his shop: *Savings, Cuttings of Hairs Within*; and still another, *Heir Drasser To Shave Beard or Oress Hairs Way*.

The humid climate of Japan is very destructive to books, and so the *Bush Binder* is ready to repair the damage, whether the work be in German or English. *Bestink Store* sells stationery, including ink. In so hot and dusty a country the laundryman is one of the most common and conspicuous of tradesmen; and his signs are no less versatile than himself. Many such shops have nothing

more than *I Wash you*. One once had *I wash you in the upper Story*, because the washing place was upstairs. *Gallers and Caffs* seems ambiguous until you peep inside and see the men at work on the clothes. One laundry had *Stacked Shirts* for a sign, and another *Shifts Repaired*. *Ladies and Gents washed at 3 sen each* is perhaps obvious in meaning. One of these establishments, finding itself hard pressed by a new rival who worked more cheaply, issued to its customers the following circular :

‘Ladies and Gentlemen. We the washer of every kind of cloths, blankets and so on, newly established the Company and engaged the business at No. 10. Contrary to our opposite company we will most cleanly and carefully wash our customers with possible chief price as follows :—
Ladies \$2 100 per. Gentlemen \$1.50 100 per.
Certain due to the day transacted : if we will misconduct for washing we will manage with equal kind or reasonable money for it, to our earnest request and honour we wish to have your pleasure to let us wash your clothes & so on. With our wages we will work the business. The opposite company of every clothes-washer.’

On a certain shop under the picture of a mangle, was painted this legend : *The Machine for Soothing the Wrinkles Oe the Trowers*, but whether the

shop belonged to laundry or a tailor was uncertain. A shop dealing in toilet articles advertised *Superfine Smell Soap*; and another *Best Perfuming Water Anti-flea*, a reminder to the tourist that unless he travels well-armed to native inns he may go out a marked man.

THE PRIEST

JAPAN is paramountly a priestly land, if numbers count in so characterizing a country, for there are more priests and temples to the square acre than in any other country in the world. In gorgeous and varicoloured robes or vestments, ranging from deep saffron to purple and green, priests are to be seen almost everywhere. This highly-coloured clerical attire represents the various orders of the Buddhist faith, while the priests of Shinto are usually seen in plain black and white. There are more priests than altars, just as in Europe ; but not more priests than gods, for deities are innumerable in Japan. In Europe deity has many priests, but in Nippon the priesthood has many deities. It is difficult to estimate the number of gods in the national pantheon, for they exceed the stars of heaven in multitude. The stock number given in Shinto theology is 8,000 myriad, a number rather baffling to the European mind which is quite unaccustomed to such recondite calculations. Endeavouring to grasp the idea simply leaves one gasping. The scientific experts of the Occident readily estimate the number of bacteria able to find standing room on a stated space,

such as a postage stamp, or even on a dot of grease ; but they still hesitate, as did the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, to say just how many angels could stand on the point of a needle. Japanese theologians are better guessers ; their faith is more elastic and extensive ; it comprehends the four dimensions, indeed all the quarters of the universe. They do not hesitate to claim 8,000 myriad gods. The European theologian protests that such a system is too ambitious to come within the sphere of theology : it must be relegated to the realm of bacteriology. And indeed that is really the idea that approaches more nearly to the Japanese conception of deity. Gods in millions, yea in myriads beyond number, fill all space and time, as the ether fills the universe, or the electrons the ether.

It must not be supposed that all these gods are of the same rank or occupation, or that they are accustomed to interfere or even to be interested in each other's affairs. There is a strict division of labour among them, a rigid insistence on rights without regard to duties, representing a combination as intricate and exact as a confederation of labour unions. Every department of human activity has its special god, for Japanese deity specializes more thoroughly than an American university. There is a god for carpenters, for smiths, for merchants, for farmers, for bankers, for cats and insects and so on, as well as deities

that preside over the several rooms of the dwelling house ; gods of the guest-room, the kitchen and the bathroom, and of all the utensils and conveniences pertaining thereto. All matters affecting objects and avocations have to be brought to the notice of the deities respectively concerned. They are supposedly unconcerned unless by request, like the local trams and buses ; but if they are ignored there will be trouble. Some deities are obviously busier than others, such as Inari, the goddess of rice ; and the god of insects too must needs be a busy deity, no less than the god of disease who collaborates with the god of insects.

Among the more active and energetic of national deities is Hachiman, the god of war ; he is an outstanding divinity, more effective and patriotic than any Mars or Apollo, eliciting the reverent regard of all. Nor is he so inept in diplomacy as to be interested merely in his own country ; but his interest in other lands is only to confound their politics and frustrate their knavish tricks, in the interest of Japan. Much of his peace-time activity is devoted to playing off Western nations, one against another, for the sake of the Far East ; he has an agent in every war-office throughout the world. These agents manage to survive all cabinet changes in the several countries where they operate ; and so they are able to maintain the war-spirit unbroken in the department

Hachiman knows that war is never due to governments or their cabinets, nor yet to kings, emperors and potentates, but to the permanent officials of national war offices and their technical experts. On these the god of war keeps a close eye to manipulate them as he wills. Ministers of departments may come and go, but the agents of Hachiman go on for ever. This is why Japan has never been defeated; for she alone, of all the nations, has a competent war god. Nor would the Allies in the great European War have been victorious had Japan not been one of them. On the other side of the world the pusillanimous multitude may continue to argue about who caused, and who won, the great War; but Hachiman knows.

Over all the innumerable gods of Japan preside the *Ogami* or great national deities, the spirits of the imperial ancestors. The priest divides the national pantheon into three main ranks, under which all inferior orders of deity must operate: the ancestral deities who direct the affairs of the nation; the communal deities who look after local or communal affairs; and the family gods who guard each household. The national deities are the spirits of the imperial ancestors, of whom the emperor is the incarnate representative and effective instrument; the communal deities are the spirits of the tribal leaders or chiefs of the community, the lords of the manor, who are

enshrined in the local parish temple, and attend to the affairs of the town, village or community. These *ujigami*, or communal deities, are very parochial, taking no interest in anything outside their domain. Extra-parochial petitions are ignored or snubbed. And those that worship them are like unto them, exceedingly local in spirit and outlook. The family deities are the spirits of the family heads, and are enshrined in the tablet on the *kamidana*, or godshelf, in each household. A family without a head is dead. Consequently it is essential that every family shall have a son and heir to head the family upon the decease of the existing head. Now, of all these deities the priest is the representative and active agent.

To be the vice-regent of so vast and imposing a host of deities renders the priesthood correspondingly important and essential. The English parson thinks no small beans of himself and his office because he represents only one God ; but what would he think of himself if he had the agency for 8,000 myriad ? There would then be no enduring him at all. Well, that is just how some Japanese feel about their priests. Of course the Christian priest believes that his one God is worth all the Asiatic deities put together ; and in this he may be right, for quite a number of intelligent Japanese are beginning to agree, and to take more interest in the God of Jesus than

in any of the native deities. The Christian view of God is at least less confusing to reason, and less compromising to morals. For it cannot be denied that some of the gods are of rather uncertain character. Even the priest is often found not averse to the more rational doctrine of the Church. It is not Christ that puzzles the native priest so much as some of those claiming to represent Christ. The increasing number of converts to the Christian faith only tends all the more to complicate the responsibilities of the native priesthood, until there are signs of a desire to reduce responsibility by lessening the number of the gods and improving the character of the remnant. But even a few gods are as confusing as a greater number. A Christian professor in Ireland once affirmed before a class of divinity students that the higher critics had been able considerably to reduce the number of Solomon's wives, so that the paragon of wisdom was not compromised by the number of his wives to the extent that had been hitherto believed; the professor himself had come to the conclusion that the number could be reduced by at least one half. 'And would not even that be an awful number of wives for any decent man to have?' exclaimed an undergraduate who appeared to be shocked at any extenuation of Solomon's domestic mistakes. So do some priests feel about the lessening number of deities

in the national pantheon of Japan. Even one half would still be an appalling number for any mortal priest to look after. The Christian way seems, at least, the line of least resistance.

And Oriental gods do need a good deal of looking after. What puzzles the native priest is to notice that Occidental deity apparently needs looking after too; which seems to him quite inconsistent with Christian doctrine, that God is love and aims only to do good. To the Oriental mind it is a work of supererogation to be looking after a deity that does only good. If the Oriental had such a God he would only be too grateful for such good luck, to be concerned with interfering in any way with the will of so benevolent a deity. What a lot of time, expense and trouble could be saved if gods could look after themselves and men too? At any rate, says the Oriental, a good God can be left to his own choices and devices; he should be given full freedom to go ahead and do all the good He can. No rational mind would be so profane as to presume that such a deity should be given directions or hints as to when, where and how the good was to be done. Yet, when the priest went to a Christian meeting where intercessions were being offered on behalf of missions, the paper handed to him had printed on it petitions requesting the Christian God to take due and adequate interest in the spread of the Gospel, His own work; and was given explicit

directions as to how this interest was to be shown ; the manner in which the Gospel was to be spread and the Church extended in Africa, India, China and Japan, together with specific suggestions as to the wisdom of deity taking advantage of the social, political and other conditions peculiar to the countries mentioned. Obviously these Christians thought themselves wiser than their God ; or were they merely bent on commending themselves to divine notice by showing how much they already knew about the work they were sent to do, and so needed wisdom not so much as funds to extend it ? At all events, to the mind of that heathen priest, the entire position seemed to suggest or imply a conception of deity not superior to his own, and certainly inferior to perfect humanity.

The Oriental gods are of quite a different character from the God of Jesus ; they require an immense amount of looking after to keep them in the right way. They do good if their devotees can so persuade them, but they seem just as likely to do mischief, and that even in spite of advice to the contrary. In fact the main purpose of Oriental religion is to keep the gods from doing mischief. If the gods are the cause of all good, they are no less the cause of all evil. Deity is an all-comprehensive term, and implies a corresponding character. The duty of the priest, when he is properly paid for it, is to induce the

gods not to injure people. Religion is a device to evade such injury. There are doubtless some benevolent deities who can be safely left to their own devices. But others are obviously malevolent and malefic, and these must be diverted from activity in relation to man and the world. It is for religion to devise ways and means to achieve this. Man can get rid of evil only by reforming the gods that produce it. Prayer must be for negative rather than positive action, for omission rather than commission. The gods must be stopped doing evil. Priestly incantations consequently take a negative attitude to deity, like that of the old Scots minister who prayed 'God bless the British parliament, that it do no harm.' The purpose of religion is not to improve the life and conduct of man, but the behaviour of the gods that afflict mankind. At the same time men have to be careful not to provoke the anger and indignation of the gods against them.

Oriental religion is quite clearly a very ambitious and courageous adventure ; it implies an immense nerve and equal self-confidence. For the gods do a lot of mischief in Japan ; or is it that Japanese gods do a lot of mischief ? Take it what way one will, the mischief is done, and deity is responsible. There seems to be no sign of suspicion that even the gods would be unable to do as much mischief as is done in Japan if they had no assistance from like-minded devotees. The implication is that

since the gods themselves made these people, the evil they do must be attributed to their makers : an argument quite as rational as to hold that all makers of motor cars should be held responsible for the people they kill. Gods that do mischief cannot be ignored, to say the least.

If the Japanese priest believed that the deity who is credited with the direction of affairs in Christendom did less mischief than his own gods, he would doubtless advocate a change of allegiance; but, so far, he cannot see that any less mischief is done in the Occident than in the Orient. In the West no less than in the East the gods foment hatred, strife and war ; when deity is angry millions of people are swept away by the sword or by disease, while the steady process of vice, famine, plague, and seismic or climatic violence sweeps away human beings like flies in Asia. Divine anger, or love of sport, is the same everywhere. Once it is kindled, or the gods get gay, the gods do not measure their revenge or their sportiveness in the interest of their victims. Some people the gods regard as we do repulsive insects, fit only for destruction. All that man can do is to attempt propitiation, appeasement, or anything that seems likely to divert the divine mind from such anger or such sport. For all divine mischief is not due to anger, but to capricious sportiveness, wanton play. No doubt the fox thinks that the hunter is angry at him ; in that he is mistaken. It is

very thoughtless and even mean of him to mistake sport for anger, and play for hate. But the fox would like to divert the hunter's attention none the less. Could he raise a smoke or a smell or a thirst, it might prove effective. The priest thinks that the gods that play cruelly with men might be diverted by food with an incisive odour, by incense smoke, by symbols of sacrifice.

The degree to which Oriental deities can be deceived, or even humbugged, into accepting symbols for realities is very amazing to all who believe in the omniscience of deity. It is assumed that the intention will be taken for the deed. The gods readily approve of an elaborate system of labour-saving devices in religion. In time, no doubt, all the priest will have to do, to effect a change in the divine mind and will, is to touch an electric button and start a gramophone reciting the incantations and sutras, and the gods will never know the difference. Uninterested in personalities, which are mere illusions, the gods do not distinguish voices, not even that of a machine from that of a man. But for the present the gods have to be content with the old ways; they accept rolls of coloured paper for rolls of valuable silk; a bit of paper with a magic symbol on it for a prayer; hung near the altar this sign has a magical effect on the divine mind; the god is bothered by its presence there fluttering in the wind, and so cannot be quite indifferent to it,

if he is human, and in Japan all gods are at least human, though their humanity is apparently not ours. Prayer so presented to the notice of deity is taken as read by both sides ; at least the result is exactly the same as if time had been devoted to reading long prayers. If it be a case where the god is obtuse and necessitates a bombarding effect, the symbol can be put into a prayer-wheel, every revolution of which the god will take as a separate application to him ; and if it seems likely to be more effective still, the god can be kept under incessant pressure by connecting the wheel to an electric motor or a water-wheel. Some devotees, unable to afford the expense of priestly mediation, literally bombard the gods themselves by chewing up paper and shooting the pulp at the image of the god ; if the shot sticks it has struck home and an answer may be expected ; if it fails to adhere to the the image, the omen is not good, but the applicant may try again. As the prayer-shots dry they drop off and form a heap of used petitions at the feet of the idol, the sight of which always invites additions. The gods are apparently a dull and sleepy race of beings, and often require bells to arouse them to attention before prayer is offered.

The Japanese priest cannot, as yet, fully appreciate the Christian idea that the victims of the gods are not heard for their much speaking. Nor does he believe that the Christian priest quite believes it. He notices that in some Christian services

certain prayers are said more than once, in case, as he supposes, deity happened not to be paying proper attention at the first attempt ; and he also notices that many Christian prayers seem to imply unwillingness on the part of deity to do what ought to be done, unless so persuaded by man. To ask deity to do man's will is presumption ; and to ask that the divine will be done seems still greater presumption, if the Christian view be accepted. But not from a heathen point of view. The priest regards the will of the gods as against the will of man ; if man can induce the gods to change their minds and agree with the will of man, all will be well. At least things will be better than if the gods are left to do their own will without reference to man.

It has been shown that Shinto theology teaches that the gods are the ancestors of the people, and are divided into classes and ranks like the people. It follows, therefore, that the ascription of evil to the gods is somewhat of a reflection on ancestry, and therefore also on posterity. As the people of present-day Japan are, on the whole, better than their ancestors, it is but natural that they should ask for and expect better treatment than their ancestors were wont to put up with, or to administer to those under them, and that they should take pains to have these views duly impressed on the responsible deities. Yet some not only laugh but even gibe at deity for neglecting posterity. In

one case an image of deity was taken from its pedestal and hurled into a paddy field for failing to answer the prayer of the villagers for water during a drought that parched the crops. The Japanese, moreover, cannot but be aware that many of the ancestors, to whom they now pray, as the source of all good and evil, scrupled not in their day and generation to break the whole Ten Commandments, which modern Japan does not permit to be done with impunity. The will of such deities, it stands to reason, ought to be changed, somehow, before being allowed to operate among the people of this improved generation. Thus the conflict between theocracy and law assumes an interesting phase, with which the priest has to deal. There is doubtless a tendency to connive at the conduct of the past, as European Christians do in regard to some of the Old Testament worthies. These, however, are not worshipped as gods; while Japan's ancient worthies are regarded as divine. It is clear that no people can hope to be better than their gods; men grow like what they worship. There is little inspiration in any faith that believes deity in need of advice and direction.

To overcome this awkward and depressing aspect of religion, resort is had to ritual, and dramatic or imposing ceremonies. The difficulty here is that so long as the gods are believed to be more concerned with accuracy of ritual and

splendour of ecclesiastical organization and hierarchy than with moral and ethical distinctions and realities, the position of both priest and people is not only embarrassing, but also the hope of moral improvement is meagre. Religion divorced from morality is hopeless. If elaboration of ritual and incessant incantations do not induce the gods to repent and do good to men, what is to be done? Men must change their gods or change themselves; which means that they must do both. When this is done it will be seen that evil is of human and not of divine origin. It is really irrational to assume that because evil continues the deity desires it. It is a question whether man would ever have seen this truth had not God become incarnate to reveal it. Since it is by man that evil comes, it is only through man that God can take it away.

The priest admits that the Christian view is good in theory, but thinks it does not work in practice: it fails to fit into the facts of life. The Christian says that God is love; that He is never the author of evil; that from the dawn of creation to the present moment God has never for one second hated one of His children; that all evil, and even suffering, are due to man's opposition to the will and love of God; that if man would love God as God loves man, and love his fellow men as himself, God would soon take away the Sin of the world. The Gospel is good news

because it means that heathenism is not true : it is a libel on the nature and character of God. But to the priest this seems mere Occidental idealism, unreasoning optimism, even sloppy sentimentalism. He takes the older and darker view of existence. It is evil even to *be* at all, as the Buddhist says. The chief aim of life is to escape from the evil of existence. He points to the deeds of the gods as proof of what they are.

The priest is quite sure that he knows the works of the gods ; and he knows their character by its fruits. The gods make beautiful things, he admits ; such as flowers, fruits, women and children ; but they also make ugly and wicked things, like murderers, tigers, snakes, and fleas which are pests of the poor. Think of beings that make fleas ! Is there indeed anything so bad that such beings would not make it ? Nor have the gods ever repented of making fleas, but keep on making them, are very busy at it in fact. One would have supposed that divine beings could have found more useful, if not more congenial, activity to engage in. But *no* : fleas must be made, made well too, made even more efficiently than some women ; fleas that can work well, and work together in effective fashion, just to plague poor humanity. How can man have much in common with the creator of fleas ? Is it not most rational to have a separate and distinct god for insects ? What an insult to any respectable deity to be accused of

making fleas? The Christian might reply that the creator of fleas may possibly be more far-seeing than those they infest. Here again it is a matter of human choice : fleas prove that there is a vital distinction between a man and a beast, between you and your dog, a very necessary distinction too, since many do not see it. Man has brain enough to get rid of his fleas, both for himself and his dog, while the dog has not. The priest may not be persuaded that a certain number of fleas is good for a dog, since they keep him from brooding and being a dog ; nor is he likely to take the Christian view of deity in regard to vermin. To him fleas are simply one more example of the many evils in which gods indulge, for the benefit of others. He is persuaded that so long as gods continue to make fleas, so long will they require sound advice as to the will of man.

The priest, however, is obviously not quite fair to the gods, much as he professes to represent them. While blaming the gods, he yet takes the divine point of view in support of his profession. If the gods were as they should be, the priest would be a superfluity. It is owing to him that the gods do not treat people even worse than they do. He does not see that if we judge men by their best, rather than by their worst, the gods must be similarly appraised. The Christian insists that the divine nature cannot be fully known merely from nature ; a special revelation is

necessary, and this man has in the Incarnation of the Son of God, who shows what God's nature really is. It is only as man takes Christ's view of God, and acts accordingly, that civilization improves and evil decreases. At any rate, if man cannot hope to be better than the gods he worships, he is safer in worshipping and serving Christ than he will be by devoting himself to any or all of the gods of Asia. God has made the world in the rough and left the finishing-off process to man. The fundamental principle of concretion, by which the divine mind brings all forces into co-operation for creative achievement, is placed within the range and grasp of human will and skill, for the humanization and the consequent improvement of society. If man uses this power for constructive purposes, all will be well for him; but if not, he cannot blame deity, but only himself, for failure.

Many of the people of the Orient have already accepted this view of life, and are forsaking the priest for the prophet. They see that even the priest is constantly contradicting himself and his theology by joining with the Christians in building hospitals and institutions of mercy to defy the gods that send disease and suffering upon mankind. In spite of priestly theories of *kharmā*, and all the rest of it, the priest seems determined to change his fatalistic creed and prove himself superior to the inevitable penalties of a former existence. Disease can be taken away by man

because it is caused by man ; if the gods wanted man to have disease no human power could remove it or prevent it. Man's sins may likewise be removed and his crimes made to cease, since he is the cause of both. These facts are shaking the foundations of heathen theology. The new bacteriology is undermining the old, and the devil is not so invulnerable as he was made out. Even the gods themselves will eventually have to yield and acquiesce in the Salvation of man.

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